

2009 Freshwater Fishing in Virginia



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A publication of the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries

Commonwealth of Virginia

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This booklet is for general information. Specific laws are found in the Code of Virginia or the Game Department Regulation Manual. For answers to specific questions about fishing, contact the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries' office nearest you.

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Cover: Fishing for sunfish; ©Dwight Dyke



Virginia's Sport Fish Program and YOU

Anglers like you make it possible for Virginia to enjoy exceptional fishing and boating opportunities. Through the Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Program, you help the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries and Virginia Marine Resources Commission make fishing and boating even better each time you buy a fishing reel, fishing lure, trolling motor, or gas for your boat.

When you buy fishing equipment or gas for your boat, a portion of the federal tax goes to the Sport Fish Restoration Program. Virginia annually receives about \$5.7 million of that money, which pays 75 percent of many of the fish management and boat access projects to improve your angling pleasure.

Mission Statement

To manage Virginia's wildlife and inland fish to maintain optimum populations of all species to serve the needs of the Commonwealth; To provide opportunity for all to enjoy wildlife, inland fish, boating and related outdoor recreation and to work diligently to safeguard the rights of the people to hunt, fish and harvest game as provided for in the Constitution of Virginia; To promote safety for persons and property in connection with boating, hunting and fishing; To provide educational outreach programs and materials that foster an awareness of and appreciation for Virginia's fish and wildlife resources, their habitats, and hunting, fishing, and boating opportunities.

About The Department

Serving the public since 1916, the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries continues to move forward with renewed vigor and an encouraging sense of accomplishment.

Fisheries annually stocks over 1.2 million trout into 600 miles of trout streams and raises 13-15 million warmwater fish for stocking in our other lakes and rivers. The Department owns and operates 37 public fishing lakes and manages the fisheries in virtually all major fresh waters of the state. That's over 176,000 acres in lakes and ponds, over 25,000 miles of fishable warmwater streams and rivers, and over 2,800 miles of trout waters. In order to provide access to these waters, the Department operates and maintains 219 launching ramps.

It takes work to maintain a plentiful supply of wildlife. Multiple wildlife projects are ongoing and hundreds of jobs happen every day that often go unnoticed. The Department maintains over 1,000 miles of road and keeps up with more than 5,000 informational signs, along with nearly 200,000

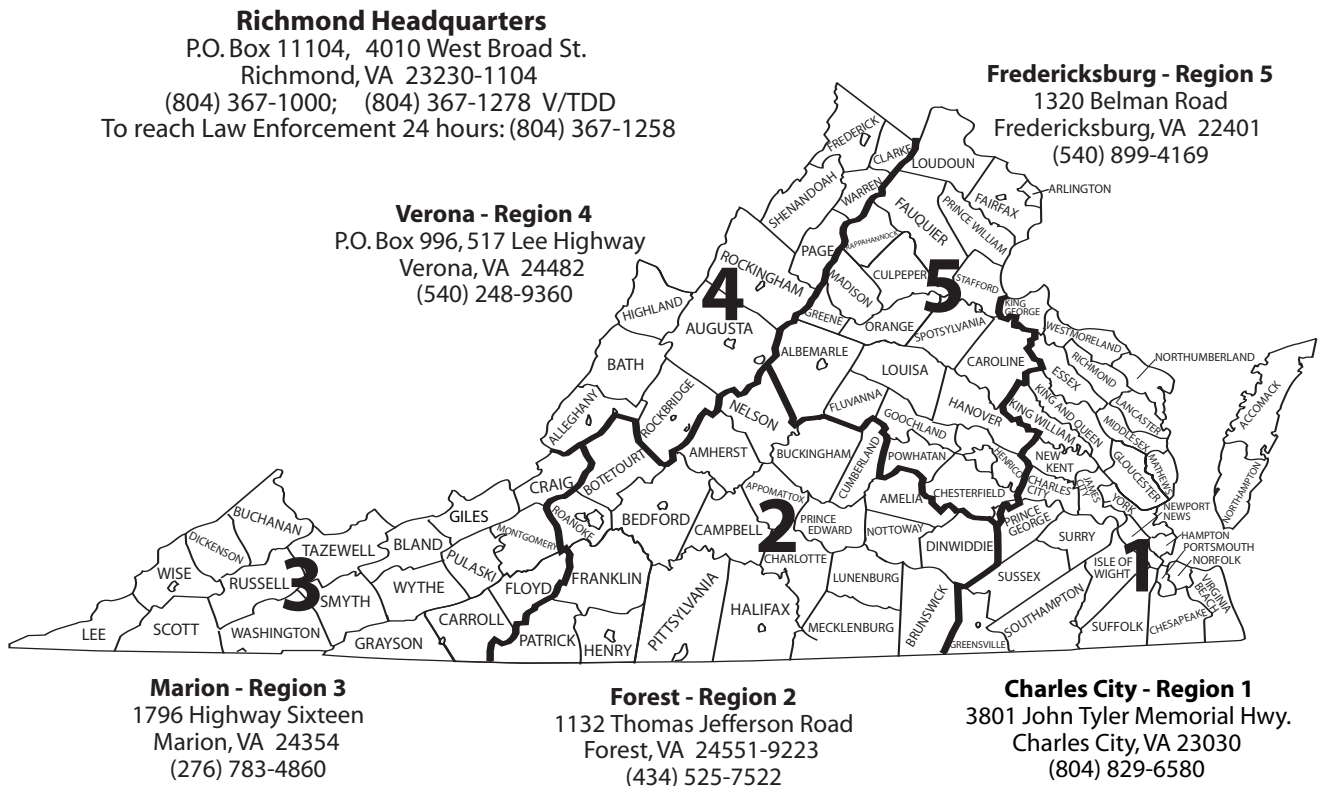
acres of land on 37 management areas that are kept open and in good shape for public use.

A big part of Virginia's wildlife abundance results from the work of the Virginia conservation police, who annually check over 54,000 hunters, more than 75,000 anglers, and at least 30,000 boaters as they patrol over 3,000,000 miles annually.

All of this work to keep fish and game abundant in Virginia is paid for by the hunters, anglers, and wildlife enthusiasts themselves. The Department receives almost 100 percent of its funds from hunting and fishing licenses, boat titling and registration fees, state sales taxes from hunting, fishing, and wildlife watching equipment, and Federal Aid in Sport Fish and Wildlife Restoration Funds from the sale of fishing and hunting equipment and motor boat fuel.

Be sure to buy your license before going fishing. Hope you have safe and enjoyable fishing trips.

If you have questions or need assistance, contact the office nearest you.



Additional Contacts

Report Violations: 1-800-237-5712

Conservation Police Officer (Game Warden): 804-367-1258

DGIF Customer Service: 866-721-6911

Trout Stocking: 434-525-3474

Snakehead Fish Reporting: 800-770-4951

Saltwater Fishing/Regulations: 800-541-4646

Potomac River Fisheries Commission: 800-266-3904

Dept. of Environmental Quality: 800-592-5482

State Parks: 800-933-7275

Shenandoah National Park: 540-999-3500

National Forests (George Washington/Jefferson): 540-265-5100

What's New For 2009

The following fishing regulation changes are new beginning January 1, 2009. More details can be found in sections that follow this summary.

General

- The number of pages of this 2009 book has been reduced to save on printing costs; however, all freshwater fishing regulations can still be found on pages 5–21. Some of the general information previously found toward the end of this book can now only be found on our Web site, www.HuntFishVA.com, or obtained by contacting the Department office nearest you (see page 4 for offices).

Trout

- The Hardware River delayed harvest trout section in Fluvanna County has been expanded (see page 19).
- Coursey Springs Trout Rearing Station in Bath County is closed for a major reconstruction project. See pages 46–47 in the Trout Guide section for information about how this will affect trout stockings in 2009.

Fishing License Information and Fees

Residency Qualifications:

- (1) persons who have been a bonafide resident of the city, county, or state for six consecutive months immediately preceding the date of application for license;
- (2) persons who have been domiciliary residents of the state for at least two months upon approval of a completed affidavit to be furnished by the Game Department;
- (3) legal voters in Virginia;
- (4) members of the armed forces if they reside in the Commonwealth and are on active duty and are stationed at military installations within, or on ships based in the Commonwealth;
- (5) students (including nonresident students boarding on campus) residing in Virginia who are enrolled in bonafide Virginia schools;
- (6) unnaturalized owners of real property in Virginia who have resided in a county for five years immediately prior to making application for a license may apply for resident licenses only in the county where they qualify.

Every person who is required to have a license must carry such license and shall show the license immediately upon demand of any officer whose duty it is to enforce the game and inland fish laws, or upon the demand of any owner or lessee, or any employee or representative of such owner or lessee, upon whose land or water such person may be hunting, trapping or fishing.

No state or county resident license to hunt, trap or fish in or on the lands or inland waters of this Commonwealth shall be deemed to be issued until the certificate printed on the reverse side of that license shall have been signed by the named licensee.

Exceptions

All persons, except those listed below, must purchase the proper licenses before fishing.

- Resident or non-resident landowners, their spouses, their children and grandchildren and the spouses of such children and grandchildren, or the landowner's parents, resident or non-resident, do not need a license to hunt, trap or fish within the boundaries of their own lands and inland waters.
- Residents under 16 years of age (also do not need a trout license).
- Tenants, on the land they rent and occupy, are not required to have a license, but must have the written permission of the landowner.
- Guests fishing in individually owned private ponds.
- Non-resident children under 12 (except in designated stocked trout waters) when accompanied by a properly licensed adult.
- Legally blind persons.
- Any Indian who "habitually" resides on an Indian reservation or a member of the Virginia recognized tribes who resides in the Commonwealth is not required to have a license; however, such Indian must have on his person an identification card or paper signed by the chief of his tribe, a valid tribal identification card, written confirmation through a central tribal registry, or certification from a tribal office.



**Free
Fishing
Days**

June 5, 6, 7, 2009

No fishing license required
except in designated
stocked trout waters.

For more information:
www.HuntFishVA.com

Customer Service Center 1-866-721-6911

A customer service center is available to help purchasers of hunting and fishing licenses. The center is open from 8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday–Friday, except holidays. Representatives at the center can answer questions about licensing, assist you in purchasing the licenses appropriate for your hunting or fishing outing, correct information on a current license or re-issue a lost license. You can also send an e-mail to: customerservice@dgif.virginia.gov.

Lifetime Licenses



Resident and nonresident lifetime licenses are purchased by an application and require supporting documentation of age, residency and/or disability. They are issued only through the Richmond office. Retail license agents cannot issue these licenses. Applications can be submitted in person at the Richmond office or mailed in. License applications can be obtained by calling customer service at 1-866-721-6911 or found on the Department's Web site at www.HuntFishVA.com.

Replacement License

If you purchased a license from a retail license agent, such as a sporting goods store, you can request a replacement at any retail license agent.

If you purchased a license online, by phone, by mail, or from the Richmond office you will need to request a replacement from customer service by calling toll free 1-866-721-6911, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday-Friday (except holidays).

National Forest Permit

All persons required to have a license (except holders of a senior citizen license) are required to have a National Forest Permit when fishing on National Forest lands except the North and South Fork of the Shenandoah River, Skidmore Lake in Rockingham County, North Fork Pound Reservoir, Lake Moomaw, the Jackson River below Gathright Dam, and in Wilson Creek below Douthat Lake in Alleghany and Bath counties.

It is unlawful to fish on waters of any public or private club, association or preserve without a proper license.

License Fees

The issuance fee is included in the prices below.

Fishing licenses are valid for one year from the date of purchase.

Resident Fees

Sportsman's License (16 years or older)120.00
Includes hunting license, bear deer turkey license (valid July 1-June 30), archery license, crossbow license, muzzleloader license, freshwater fishing license and trout license

Freshwater fish in county or city of residence *11.00

Freshwater fish statewide *18.00

Freshwater and saltwater statewide*30.00

Freshwater statewide for 5 consecutive days11.00
Not valid in designated stocked trout waters

Freshwater and saltwater statewide for 5 consecutive days16.00
Not valid in designated stocked trout waters

65 and over license to fish freshwater*7.00

Service-connected Totally and Permanently Disabled Veteran
Resident Lifetime License*10.00
To hunt and freshwater fish (available through the Richmond Office or by mail).

Totally and Permanently Disabled Resident Special Lifetime
License to freshwater fish *10.00
Available through the Richmond Office or by mail

Fish in designated stocked trout waters18.00
Required in addition to other resident licenses if fishing in these waters.

Special lifetime to fish freshwater* or
Special lifetime trout license to fish in designated stocked trout waters
A valid resident fishing license is also required.
Available through the Richmond office or by mail.

Age up to age 44255.00
Age 45-50205.00
Age 51-55155.00
Age 56-60105.00
Age 61-6455.00
Age 65 and over15.00

* A valid trout license (\$18.00 annual or lifetime) is required in addition to other resident licenses only if you are fishing in designated stocked trout waters.

continued on page 7

Where to Obtain a License

- ◆ **Online:** At www.HuntFishVA.com. Select the license(s) you want, pay with your VISA or MasterCard, and print your license(s) after you pay.
- ◆ **In Person:** Sold by some clerks of the Circuit Court and hundreds of license agents around the state.
- ◆ **Mail:** Download and complete the proper form from the Department's Web site and mail it to the address provided.
- ◆ **Phone:** 1-866-721-6911 (Customer Service), Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m.- 5:00 p.m.

Nonresident Fees

Freshwater fish statewide **	36.00
Freshwater and saltwater fish statewide**	48.00
Freshwater fish statewide for 5 consecutive days **	16.00
Freshwater and saltwater fish statewide for 5 consecutive days**	21.00
Not valid in designated stocked trout waters	
Fish in designated stocked trout waters	36.00
Required in addition to other nonresident licenses if fishing in these waters	
Nonresident special lifetime license to fish freshwater **	505.00
<i>Available through the Richmond office or by mail.</i>	
Nonresident Special Lifetime Trout License	505.00
To fish in designated stocked trout waters A valid nonresident fishing license is also required; <i>(available through Richmond office or by mail)</i>	

** A valid nonresident trout license (\$36.00 annual or \$505.00 lifetime) is required in addition to other nonresident licenses only if you are fishing in designated stocked trout waters.

Miscellaneous Fees

Daily Permit Required at Big Tumbling Creek, Crooked Creek, and Douthat State Park Pay-As-You-Go (Fee) Fishing Areas	6.50
Required in addition to regular resident, non-resident, or non-resident 5 day license	
National Forest Permit	4.00
For fishing in the National Forest. This permit is required in addition to other fishing licenses [exceptions: senior (65 or older) and complimentary licenses].	
Valid for one year from date of purchase.	
County Dip Net Permit	4.50
To take shad, herring, and mullet	

Angling Education Program

Fishing is such an exciting sport, one that can be enjoyed by all. Yet there are so many who have never experienced the thrill of catching a fish! One of the great things about angling is that there are no restrictions to participants, regardless of age, gender, or ability, anyone can enjoy fishing and the outdoors.

The VDGIF Angling Education Program offers angling workshops throughout the year. The workshops provide educational instruction about fishing techniques, casting, rigging, biology and opportunities to fish. Workshops are conducted statewide covering a wide variety of species and techniques and are designed for beginners or experienced anglers.

If you are interested in becoming a partner in fishing education, or participating in a program, visit our Web site at www.HuntFishVA.com.



Catfishing workshop: ©DGIF

Freshwater/ Saltwater License Lines on Tidal Waters

Persons fishing upstream of the designated lines on the following waters must have a valid freshwater fishing license while those fishing below the lines must have a valid saltwater fishing license:

*Potomac River: Rt. 301 Bridge

Rappahannock River: Rt. 360 Bridge

Piankatank River/Dragon Run: The 1st set of power lines immediately upriver of Anderson Point

York River System (including the Mattaponi and Pamunkey Rivers): Rt. 33 Bridges

James River: A line connecting Hog Point on Hog Island (Surry County) and the downstream point of the mouth of College Creek (James City County).

Below these designated lines a freshwater or saltwater license will be valid on any tidal portion of any tributary entering the above mainstem waters.

The following waters are entirely freshwater and require a freshwater fishing license throughout: Meherrin River; Notoway River; Blackwater River (Chowan drainage); Back Bay, Northwest River, and North Landing River and Intercoastal Waterway upstream to Great Bridge Locks; and Dismal Swamp Canal below (or South) of Deep Creek Locks.

*See reciprocal license section on page 8.

Fall Line

The Fall Line is defined as the following landmarks:

- Rappahannock River -Rt. 1 Bridge;
- Mattaponi River-Rt. 360 Bridge;
- Pamunkey River-Rt. 360 Bridge;
- Chickahominy River-Walkers Dam;
- James River -14th Street Bridge;
- Occoquan River-I-95 Bridge.

Reciprocal Licenses

All reciprocal license agreements listed below refer to both boat and bank anglers.

Buggs Island (Kerr) and Gaston: Virginia or North Carolina state fishing licenses and permits are honored on those waters lying east of Brantly Steam Plant Dam on the Dan River in Virginia and the Rt. 360 Bridge on the Staunton River of Kerr Reservoir to the Gaston Dam on the Roanoke River, including all tributary waters accessible by boat from the main bodies of the reservoirs, or from the Island Creek subimpoundment. (Note: North Carolina regulations apply on North Carolina portions of these waters.)

Blue Ridge Parkway: Virginia and North Carolina licenses are honored on all Parkway waters. (Note: Virginia regulations apply in Parkway waters in Virginia except where noted herein or in federal regulations).

New River: Virginia or North Carolina state fishing licenses and permits are honored on the mainstream portion lying between the confluence of the North and South Forks of the New River in North Carolina (Alleghany County) downstream to the confluence of the New and Little Rivers in Virginia (Grayson County).

Potomac River: Virginia has reciprocal license agreements for three sections of the Potomac River, one above the District of

Columbia and two below the District of Columbia. License requirements are different for these sections.

Upper Potomac River [above Little Falls (upper border with the District of Columbia) to the West Virginia border/state line]: Resident anglers with state freshwater licenses in Virginia or Maryland may fish the Potomac River and from both banks.

Middle Potomac and its Tidal Freshwater Tributaries (between Woodrow Wilson Bridge and Rt. 301): Valid Virginia freshwater and saltwater (excluding county licenses), Potomac River Fisheries Commission, and Maryland Bay sport licenses are all honored on the mainstem Potomac and Maryland tributaries up to the demarcation lines (see below); all of these same licenses, except the Virginia saltwater licenses, are honored on the Virginia tributaries up to demarcation lines (see below):

Virginia tributaries up to the following demarcation lines:

Accotink Creek: Rt. 1 Bridge
Aquia Creek: First bridge above Aquia Harbor Marina
Chopawansic: Rt. 1 Bridge
Chotank: Causeway
Dougue Creek: Rt. 235, Mt. Vernon Memorial Parkway
Four Mile Run: Rt. 1 Bridge
Hunting Creek: Rt. 1 Bridge

Little Hunting Creek: Rt. 1 Bridge
Neabsco: Rt. 1 Bridge
Occoquan River: Fall Line
Pohick Creek: Rt. 611 (Colchester Road)
Potomac Creek: Rt. 608 Bridge
Powells Creek: Rt. 1 Bridge
Quantico Creek: Rt. 1 Bridge
Unnamed bays and tributaries accessible by gas-powered boats.

Maryland tributaries up to the following demarcation lines:

Anacostia River: downstream of Northeast Branch Bridge at northbound lane of Alternate Rt. 1.
Bladensburg Road, and Northwest Branch Bridge at southbound lane of Rhode Island Avenue.
Piscataway Creek: Downstream of Rt. 224 Bridge (Livingston Rd.)
Henson Run: Downstream of Oxon Hill Road Bridge
Nanjemoy Creek: Downstream of Rt. 6 (Trappe) Bridge
Port Tobacco Creek: Downstream of Rt. 6 Bridge
Mattawoman Creek: Downstream of Rt. 225 Bridge
Unnamed bays and tributaries accessible by gas-powered boats.

Lower Potomac River (between its mouth and the Rt. 301 Bridge): Valid Virginia saltwater (excluding County licenses), Maryland Bay sport, or Potomac River Fisheries Commission licenses are honored in the main stem. In Virginia tributaries below 301, Virginia freshwater and saltwater, and Potomac River Fisheries Commission licenses are honored.

Note: Maryland regulations apply for the Upper Potomac River and the Maryland Potomac River tributaries (call 1-800-688-3467 for current Maryland regulations).

Note: Potomac River Fisheries Commission regulations are enforced in the Potomac mainstem between the lower District of Columbia border and the mouth of the Potomac (call 1-804-224-7148 or 1-800-266-3904 for current PRFC regulations).

Waters between the Woodrow Wilson Bridge and Little Falls are controlled by D.C., and a D.C. fishing license is required.

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Upcoming Events ♦ Outdoor Skills Education
And, much, much, more

www.HuntFishVA.com

General Freshwater Fishing Regulations

Fishing in inland waters must be by angling with a hook and line or rod and reel. (See exceptions for nongame fish.) A hand landing net may be used to land fish legally hooked in all waters. Any person who fishes on another's property must have the landowner's permission to do so except on designated stocked trout waters along which signs have been placed indicating that the waters are open to public fishing. No species of fish, freshwater mussel or mollusk may be taken in inland waters to be sold, except under special permits provided by law. It is unlawful to use lime, dynamite or any other substances to destroy fish, or to cast or allow noxious matter to pass into watercourses that might destroy fish or fish spawn, or to deposit trash in streams or lakes or along their banks. It is unlawful to have more than the daily creel limit of any fish in possession while afield or on the waters. The daily creel limit includes live possession of fish.

It shall be unlawful for any person, while fishing, to remove the head or tail or otherwise change the appearance of any game fish (except bluegill sunfish and bream of the sunfish family) having a daily creel or size limit so as to obscure its species or render it impracticable to measure its total original length or count the number of such fish in possession. In addition, it shall be unlawful for any person to possess or transport such altered game fish while on the water. However, the prohibition against possession and transportation in the previous sentence shall not apply to the preparation of lawfully obtained fish for immediate use as food or any lawful commercial use of such fish.

It is unlawful to take, kill, capture, or possess any threatened or endangered species.

Virginia Game Fish

"Game fish" as defined by the Code of Virginia means and includes trout, all of the sunfish family (including largemouth bass, smallmouth bass and spotted bass, rock bass, bream, bluegill and crappie), walleye, white bass, chain pickerel, muskellunge, northern pike and striped bass.

Stocking Fish

It is unlawful to stock any species of fish into inland waters of the Commonwealth without first obtaining written approval from the Department (private ponds excepted).

Trout as Bait

Artificially raised rainbow trout may be sold as bait for use in the James and New rivers, and in impoundments (ponds, lakes, reservoirs), except impoundments listed as designated stocked trout waters, Lake Moomaw, and Philpott Reservoir. Persons possessing purchased rainbow trout for bait must have a valid invoice or bill of sale, specifying date of purchase, the number of trout purchased, and name of an individual or business permitted to sell trout.

Dam Regulations

Buggs Island: Mechanical lure launchers may not be used within 600 yards below Buggs Island Dam

Walkers Dam: Only rod and reel and hand lines permitted within 500 yards below dam. It is illegal to snag fish at Walkers Dam.

Leesville Dam: It shall be unlawful to fish, attempt to fish, assist others in fishing, collect or attempt to collect bait while wading, or operating, or anchoring any vessel in the waters of the Roanoke River from Leesville Dam downstream 840 feet to a permanent overhead cable. However, fishing is permitted from behind safety railings of the Department's Leesville Dam fishing structure.

Fishways: It shall be unlawful to fish or to collect bait from March 1 through June 15 within 300 feet of Boshers Dam Fishway on the north bank of the James River or within 150 feet of Harvell Dam Fishway on the south bank of the Appomattox River.

Department-Owned or Controlled Lakes, Ponds, Streams or Boat Access Sites

A. Motors and boats. Unless otherwise posted, the use of boats propelled by gasoline motors, sail, or mechanically operated paddle wheel is prohibited at Department-owned or controlled lakes, ponds, or streams.

B. Method of fishing. Taking any fish at any Department-owned or controlled lake, pond, or stream by any means other than by use of one or more attended poles with hook and line attached is prohibited unless otherwise posted, in which case cast nets may be used for collecting nongame fish for use as bait.

C. Hours for fishing. Fishing is permitted 24-hours a day unless otherwise posted at Department-owned or controlled lakes, ponds, streams or boat access sites.

D. Seasons, hours and methods of fishing, size and creel limits, hunting. The open seasons for fishing, as well as fishing hours, methods of taking fish, and the size, possession and creel limits, and hunting and trapping on Department-owned or Department-controlled lakes, ponds, streams or boat

continued on page 10



access sites shall conform to the regulations of the board unless otherwise excepted by posted rules by the director or his designee. Such posted rules shall be displayed at each lake, pond, stream or boat access site, in which case the posted rules shall be in effect. Failure to comply with posted rules concerning seasons, hours, methods of taking, bag limits, and size, possession and creel limits shall constitute a violation of this regulation

E. Other uses. Camping overnight or building fires (except in developed and designated areas), swimming, or wading in Department-owned or Department-controlled lakes, ponds, or streams (except by anglers, hunters, and trappers actively engaged in fishing, hunting, or trapping), is prohibited. All other uses shall conform to the regulations of the board unless excepted by posted rules.

F. Fishing tournaments, etc. It shall be unlawful to organize, conduct, supervise, or solicit entries for fishing tournaments, rodeos or other fishing events on lakes, ponds, or streams owned by the Department for which prizes are offered, awarded or accepted based on size or numbers of fish caught, either in money or other valuable considerations. This will not prohibit events approved by the Department which are intended to promote youth fishing or provide instruction, provided no prizes, as defined above, are awarded and no participation fees are charged.

Special Regulations

Smith Mountain Lake

It shall be lawful to fish using only bait with a single point unweighted bait hook (no artificial lures allowed) in that portion of Witcher Creek in Smith Mountain Lake from behind the no wake buoy line at the mouth of the cove known as Cedar Key to the back of the cove from April 15 to May 31, both dates inclusive. A single point, unweighted bait hook is defined as a hook that does not have a weight affixed to the hook. Any other weight must be attached to the line at least 12 inches above the hook (no weights below the hook).

Lick, Bear and Laurel Creeks

It shall be unlawful to use fish as bait or to use seines, nets or traps to take fish in Lick Creek in Smyth and Bland counties, Bear Creek in Smyth County, and Laurel Creek in Tazewell and Bland counties.

Catch the Excitement!



2008 Kids 'n Fishing Photo Contest; ©DGIF

Kids n' Fishing Photo Contest

www.HuntFishVA.com



A disproportionate number of sportsmen and women die in boating accidents, most often from falls overboard or capsizing. Wearing a life jacket may save your life. It is estimated that 88% of boating-related drownings could have been prevented had the victim been wearing a lifejacket.

Are You On Board With Compliance?

In 2007, the Virginia General Assembly enacted a law establishing requirements for boating safety education. This applies to ALL motorboat operators with a motor of 10 horsepower and greater. This requirement will be phased in over several years as follows:

Personal Watercraft (PWC) "jet-ski"

PWC, age 20 or younger, July 1, 2009

PWC, age 35 or younger, July 1, 2010

PWC, age 50 or younger, July 1, 2011

PWC, ALL ages by July 1, 2012

Motorboat (MB) 10hp and greater

MB, age 20 or younger, July 1, 2011

MB, age 30 or younger, July 1, 2012

MB, age 40 or younger, July 1, 2013

MB, age 45 or younger, July 1, 2014

MB, age 50 or younger, July 1, 2015

MB, ALL ages, July 1, 2016

For more information visit www.dgif.virginia.gov

Game/Sport Fish Regulations

Seasons

There is a continuous, year-round season for all freshwater game and nongame fish, with the following exceptions:

1. Special times and limited closures for trout (Designated Stocked Trout Waters page 17, Trout Heritage Waters page 17, Urban Program Waters page 17, Blue Ridge Parkway page 17, and Pay-as-You-Go trout waters page 19) and
2. Certain seasons for special methods to take nongame fish pages 20–21.

Regulations for anadromous (coastal) striped bass, alewife and blueback herring above and below the fall line, in tidal rivers of the Chesapeake Bay; and anadromous (coastal) American shad and hickory shad, and all other saltwater fish below the fall line, in tidal rivers of the Chesapeake Bay, are set by the Virginia Marine Resources Commission. For more information call 1-800-541-4646.

Catch-And-Release Fishing

It is often necessary to release a fish because it is too small, illegal to keep, or you just don't want to take it home to eat. In some cases, releasing fish unharmed is a conservation measure that will assist in helping to maintain and build population abundance and size. The Department of Game and Inland Fisheries encourages anglers who practice catch and release fishing to use a few simple precautions when doing so. Using the tips below will help to assure that the fish you release will survive to bite again another day.

- ✓ When catching a fish, play it quickly and keep the fish in the water as much as possible while handling. Avoid the use of a net in landing the fish and release it quickly to avoid exhaustion.
- ✓ Handle the fish gently and as little as possible. Do not put your fingers in its eyes or gills. Avoid wiping the slime or scales off the fish; this reduces their survival by making them more likely to develop a disease or infection.

- ✓ Remove hook promptly using needlenose pliers or a "hook out" device. If the hook is too deep or hooked in the stomach or throat, cut the line and leave the hook in. The hook will dissolve without harming the fish.
- ✓ Carefully revive the fish if it appears exhausted by holding it upright and moving it gently forward so water runs over the gills. Release the fish when it begins to struggle and is able to swim.
- ✓ Do not hold fish in a live well and later decide to release it. If you are going to release a fish, do so right away.
- ✓ With a little care and by following the guidelines set above, you can give released fish a better chance of survival.
- ✓ See the "Qualifying a Trophy Fish by Length and Photo" option for Trophy Fish Awards on page 50.

Report Violations

call 1-800-237-5712 or

e-mail: wildcrime@dgif.virginia.gov



Didymo is an invasive freshwater algae that can form massive blooms and cover entire river bottoms. It thrives in cold, clear, shallow water and is currently found in at least four Virginia trout rivers: Smith, Jackson, Pound, and Dan rivers below dams.

Four steps anglers can take to help prevent the spread of didymo:

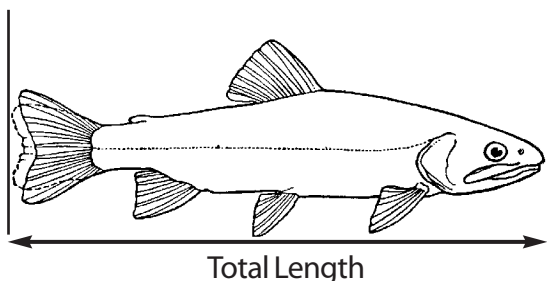
- **CHECK:** Before leaving the river, look for strands of algae on your equipment. Remove the strands and leave them on site.
- **CLEAN:** Soak and scrub all gear for at least one minute in a 2% solution of household bleach. Make sure that all surfaces of your equipment are thoroughly treated.
- **DRY:** If cleaning is not practical, dry equipment in the sun for at least 48 hours before using in another stream.
- **LEAVE:** Fish, plants, and vegetation should not be moved between streams.

For more information, please see our Web site at www.HuntFishVA.com.

The tables that follow give statewide creel and length limits for major sport fish, and exceptions for major rivers and lakes. Regulations for many smaller lakes and boat access areas are posted on site, and posted regulations are in effect (see “D” under Department Owned or Controlled Lakes, Ponds, Streams or Boat Access Sites, pages 9–10).

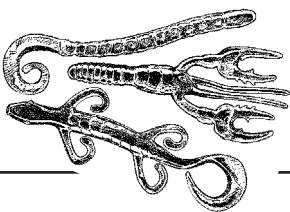
Type of Fish	Sub-type or Locations	Creel and Length Limit	Geographic Exceptions	Creel or Length Limits for Exceptions
Bass: largemouth smallmouth spotted <i>continued on page 13</i>		5 per day in the aggregate No statewide length limits	Lakes Briery Creek Lake	No bass 14 to 24 inches, only 1 per day longer than 24 inches
			Buggs Island (Kerr)	Only 2 of 5 bass less than 14 inches
			Claytor Lake	No bass less than 12 inches
			Flannagan Reservoir	No bass less than 12 inches
			Lake Gaston	Only 2 of 5 bass less than 14 inches
			Leesville Reservoir	Only 2 of 5 bass less than 14 inches
			Lake Moomaw	No bass less than 12 inches
			Philpott Reservoir	No bass less than 12 inches
			Quantico Marine Base waters	No bass 12 to 15 inches
			Smith Mt. Lake and its tributaries below Niagara Dam	Only 2 of 5 bass less than 14 inches
			Rivers Clinch River—within the boundaries of Scott, Wise, Russell or Tazewell counties	No bass 11 to 14 inches
			Dan River and tributaries downstream from the Brantly Steam Plant, Danville	Only 2 of 5 bass less than 14 inches
			James River—Confluence of the Jackson and Cowpasture rivers (Botetourt County) downstream to the 14th Street Bridge in Richmond	No bass 14 to 22 inches, only 1 per day longer than 22 inches
			New River—Fields Dam (Grayson County) downstream to the VA-WV State line and its tributary Little River downstream from Little River Dam in Montgomery County (This does not include Claytor Lake which is delineated as: The upper end of the island at Allisonia downstream to the Dam	No bass 14 to 20 inches, only 1 per day longer than 20 inches
			North Fork Holston River- Rt. 91 Bridge upstream of Saltville, Va downstream to the VA-TN state line	No bass less than 20 inches, only 1 per day longer than 20 inches

How to Measure a Fish



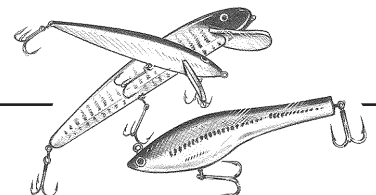
- Lay the fish on top of or beside a flat measuring rule.
- Do not lay the rule over the curvature of the fish's body.
- Close the fish's mouth and squeeze the tail lobes together.
- Measure from the tip of the snout to the end of the tail.

Type of Fish	Sub-type or Locations	Creel and Length Limit	Geographic Exceptions	Creel or Length Limits for Exceptions
Bass largemouth smallmouth spotted			<i>Rivers continued</i> North Fork Shenandoah River- Rt.42 bridge,Rockingham Co. downstream to the confluence with S. Fork Shenandoah at Front Royal	No bass 11 to 14 inches
			Potomac River - Virginia tidal tributaries above Rt.301 bridge	No bass less than 15 inches from March 1 through June 15
			Roanoke (Staunton) River--and its tributaries below Difficult Creek, Charlotte County	Only 2 of 5 bass less than 14 inches
			Shenandoah River-- Confluence of South Fork and North Fork rivers, Front Royal, downstream to the Warren Dam, near Front Royal Base of Warren Dam, near Front Royal downstream to Rt. 17/50 bridge Rt. 17/50 bridge downstream VA--WV state line	No bass 11 to 14 inches No bass 14 to 20 inches, only 1 per day longer than 20 inches No bass 11 to 14 inches
			South Fork Shenandoah River-- Confluence of North and South rivers, below Port Republic, downstream to Shenandoah Dam, near Town of Shenandoah Base of Shenandoah Dam, near Town of Shenandoah, down- stream to Luray Dam, near Luray Base of Luray Dam, near Luray, downstream to the confluence with North Fork of Shenandoah, Front Royal	No bass 11 to 14 inches No bass 14 to 20 inches, only 1 per day longer than 20 inches No bass 11 to 14 inches
Striped bass <i>continued on page 14</i>	landlocked striped bass and landlocked striped bass X white bass hybrids	4 per day in the aggregate no fish less than 20 inches	Buggs Island (Kerr) Reservoir including the Staunton River to Leesville Dam and the Dan River to the Brantly Steam Plant (Danville)	October 1--May 31: 2 per day in the aggregate No striped bass less than 26 inches June 1--September 30: 4 per day in the aggregate No length limit.
			Smith Mountain Lake and its tributaries, including the Roanoke River upstream to Niagara Dam	2 per day in the aggregate October 1--May 31: No striped bass 26 to 36 inches June 1--September 30: No length limit

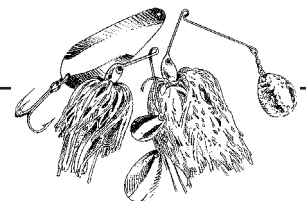


Type of Fish	Sub-type or Locations	Creel and Length Limit	Geographic Exceptions	Creel or Length Limits for Exceptions
<i>Striped bass continued</i>	anadromous (coastal) striped bass above the fall line in all coastal rivers of the Chesapeake Bay	Creel and length limits shall be set by the Virginia Marine Resources Commission for recreational fishing in tidal waters		
	striped bass in the Meherrin, Nottoway, Blackwater (Chowan Drainage), North Landing and North-west rivers and their tributaries plus Back Bay	2 per day No striped bass less than 18 inches		
White bass		5 per day No statewide length limits		
Walleye		5 per day	Flannagan, Philpott and South Holston reservoirs, and the Middle Fork Holston and South Fork Holston rivers	No walleye less than 18 inches
		No statewide length limits	Claytor Lake and New River upstream of Claytor Lake Dam	No walleye less than 20 inches
Sauger		2 per day No statewide length limits		
Chain pickerel		5 per day No statewide length limits	Gaston and Buggs Island (Kerr) reservoirs	No daily limit
Northern pike		2 per day No pike less than 20 inches		
Muskellunge		2 per day No muskellunge less than 30 inches	New River–Fields Dam (Grayson County) downstream to the VA–WV state line, including Claytor Lake	1 per day No muskellunge less than 42 inches

Type of Fish	Sub-type or Locations	Creel and Length Limit	Geographic Exceptions	Creel or Length Limits for Exceptions
Bluegill (bream) and other sunfish excluding crappie rock bass (redestye) and Roanoke bass		50 per day in the aggregate No statewide length limits	Gaston and Buggs Island (Kerr) reservoirs and that portion of the New River from the VA–NC state line downstream to the confluence of the New and Little rivers in Grayson County	No daily limit
Crappie (black or white)		25 per day in the aggregate No statewide length limits	Gaston and Buggs Island (Kerr) reservoirs and that portion of the New River from the VA–NC state line downstream to the confluence of the New and Little rivers in Grayson County	No daily limit
			Flannagan and South Holston reservoirs	No crappie less than 10 inches
Rock bass (redestye)		25 per day No statewide length limits	Gaston and Buggs Island (Kerr) reservoirs and that portion of the New River from the VA–NC state line downstream to the confluence of the New and Little rivers in Grayson County	No daily limit
			Nottoway and Meherrin rivers and their tributaries	5 per day in the aggregate with Roanoke bass No rock bass less than 8 inches
Roanoke bass		No statewide daily limit No statewide length limits	Nottoway and Meherrin rivers and their tributaries	5 per day in the aggregate with rock bass No Roanoke bass less than 8 inches
Trout		6 per day No fish less than 7 inches	See Trout Waters, pages 17–19	
Catfish	channel, white and flathead	20 per day No length limits	All rivers below the fall line	No daily limit
	blue	20 per day, only 1 blue catfish per day longer than 32 inches	All rivers below the fall line	No daily limit, except only 1 blue catfish per day longer than 32 inches
	yellow, brown, black, flat and snail bullheads	No daily limit No length limits		



Type of Fish	Sub-type or Locations	Creel and Length Limit	Geographic Exceptions	Creel or Length Limits for Exceptions
American shad and hickory shad	James River above the fall line (14th Street Bridge), the Meherrin River above Emporia Dam, the Chickahominy River above Walkers Dam, the Appomattox River above Harvell Dam, the Pamunkey River and the Mattaponi River above the Rt. 360 bridge, and the Rappahannock River above the Rt. 1 bridge	No possession: (catch and release only)		
	below the fall line in tidal rivers of the Chesapeake Bay	Creel and length limits are set by the Virginia Marine Resources Comm.		
	Meherrin River below Emporia Dam, Nottway River, Blackwater River, (Chowan Drainage), North Landing and Northwest rivers, and their tributaries plus Back Bay	10 per day in the aggregate No length limits		
Anadromous (coastal) alewife and blueback herring	Above and below the fall line in all coastal rivers of the Chesapeake Bay	Creel and length limits are set by the Virginia Marine Resources Comm.		
	Meherrin River, Nottoway River, Blackwater River (Chowan Drainage), North Landing and Northwest rivers and their tributaries plus Back Bay	No possession		
Other native or naturalized nongame fish		20 per day No length limits	Statewide	See pages 20–21 for exceptions
	Threatened and endangered species	No possession		
Grass carp		No possession: (catch and release only)		
Snakehead fish	Anglers may possess a snakehead taken from Virginia waters if they immediately kill the fish and notify DGIF (see office listings on page 4 or call 1-800-770-4951. See snakehead identification on page 31.			
Non-native (exotic) fish	See page 21			



Trout Waters

Statewide Limits

Six fish per day. No fish less than 7 inches; see exceptions below.

Designated Stocked Trout Waters

“Designated stocked trout waters” include those waters that are stocked with harvestable-sized trout and are listed by the Director in the annual Trout Stocking Plan, see Trout Guide pages 48 and 49. These waters will only be considered designated stocked trout waters from October 1 through June 15 (trout license required). A trout license is not required from June 16 through September 30. Trout angling hours on designated stocked trout waters are from 5:00 a.m. until one hour after sunset. See exceptions for Trout Heritage Waters (next column), Urban Program Waters (below) and Pay-As-You-Go Trout Fishing (page 19). Designated stocked trout waters are posted by the Department with appropriate “stocked trout waters” signs.

It is unlawful to fish in designated stocked trout waters after the daily creel limit of trout has been obtained or during the closed hours for taking trout. Once a trout is taken into possession by placing in the creel (basket, bucket, stringer, cooler, etc.) it becomes part of the daily creel limit and may not be released (culled). It is unlawful to feed, bait or snag trout in designated stocked trout waters. It shall be unlawful for any person fishing in designated stocked trout waters to use more than one rod, one line, and one baited hook (a treble hook is considered one hook); however, any combination of artificial lures is allowed. It shall be unlawful to use seines and nets in designated stocked waters, except that a hand-landing net to land fish legally hooked may be used in all waters.

Urban Program Waters

Waters selected by the Director for inclusion into the Urban Fishing Program will be considered designated stocked trout waters from November 1 through April 30 only (trout license required). A trout license is not required from May 1 through October 31. In addition trout may be creeled from these waters year round and the **trout creel limit is 4 per day**. Once a trout is taken into pos-



Trout fishing on Big Wilson Creek; © Dwight Dyke

session by placing in the creel (basket, bucket, stringer, cooler, etc.) it becomes part of the daily creel limit and may not be released (culled).

Trout Heritage Waters

Trout Heritage Waters selected by the Director will be considered designated stocked trout waters. They will be closed to fishing on the Friday prior to the first Saturday in April and will reopen to fishing at 9:00 a.m. on the first Saturday in April.

Trout Stocking Information

The Department has provided a telephone number to call for trout stocking information. This recording is updated each day at 4:00 p.m. during the stocking season. The number is 1-434-525-FISH (3474). This information is also updated daily on the Department's Web page: www.HuntFish-VA.com.

Artificial Lure Definition

Artificial lure shall include manufactured or handmade flies, spinners, plugs, spoons, and facsimilies of live animals, but shall not be construed to include artificially produced organic baits and fish eggs that are intended to be ingested. Artificial lure with single hook shall mean any single point lure (with no multiple point hooks). Where single-hook artificial lures are required, a multiple number of single-hook lures (such as drop-flies) fished in a series is permitted.

Special Trout Regulations

Jackson River: There is a **12-inch minimum size limit** and **4 fish per day creel limit** on trout taken from Gathright Dam downstream to the Westvaco Dam at Covington in Alleghany County. All trout less than 12 inches must be immediately returned to the water and no trout less than 12 inches may be in possession while fishing this section. Look under 16-inch minimum, 2 fish per day on page 16 for the Bath County special trout section of Jackson River.

Blue Ridge Parkway: Fishing is prohibited from one half hour after sunset until one half hour before sunrise. No live or dead fish or fish eggs may be used as bait. Digging for worms is prohibited. Special creel limits and other regulations for Parkway waters may be posted.

Shenandoah National Park: Only single-point hook artificial lures may be used—no bait. On those streams open to harvest, the creel limit is **6 trout per day with a 9-inch minimum size for brook trout** and a **7-inch minimum size for brown and rainbow trout**. On all other streams open to fishing, catch and release regulations apply. The release of any brown trout back into any Park stream is prohibited and brown trout less than 7 inches must be disposed of within the Park but away from Park streams, roads or trails. This is an effort to limit the impacts of brown trout on the native brook trout populations. Contact the Shenandoah National

Park at 540-999-3500 for the annual list of streams open to harvest.

Reservoirs: There is a **16-inch minimum size limit and 2 fish per day creel limit** on trout taken from Moomaw Reservoir.

Special Trout Stream Areas

Fishing in the following waters is permitted under the following regulations only:

- Only single point hook artificial lures may be used unless otherwise noted. See artificial lure definition above.
- No bait may be in possession while fishing these waters.
- All trout less than the minimum size must be immediately returned to the water unharmed. No trout less than the minimum size may be in possession while fishing in these waters.

Note: The special trout stream areas marked with an asterisk (*) on this page require a landowner permit. For further information refer to the Trout Guide at www.HuntFish-Va.com or contact your local fisheries office listed on page 4.

9-inch Minimum

Big and Little Wilson Creeks (Grayson County): That portion within the Grayson Highlands State Park and the Jefferson National Forest Mount Rogers National Recreation Area.

Cabin Creek (Grayson County): That portion of stream and its tributaries within the Grayson Highlands State Park and the Jefferson National Forest Mount Rogers National Recreation Area.

Conway River (Greene and Madison counties): That portion of stream and its tributaries within the Rapidan Wildlife Management Area.

Little Stony Creek (Giles County): That portion of stream within the Jefferson National Forest.

Little Stony Creek (Shenandoah County): That portion of stream within the George Washington National Forest.

North Fork Buffalo River (Amherst County): That portion of the stream and its tributaries within the George Washington National Forest.

St. Mary's River (Augusta County): That portion of stream and its tributaries upstream from the gate near the George Washington National Forest property line.

Ramsey's Draft (Augusta County): That portion of the stream and its tributaries within the George Washington National Forest.

12-inch Minimum

Green Cove Creek (Washington County): That portion of stream from Rt. 859 downstream to its mouth.

Snake Creek (Carroll County): Upstream from its mouth to Hall Ford on Big Snake Fork and to the junction of Rts. 922 and 674 on Little Snake Fork.

Smith Creek (Alleghany County): That portion from the Clifton Forge Dam downstream to a sign at the Forest Service boundary above the C & O Dam.

Whitetop Laurel (Washington County): That portion of stream upstream from the first railroad trestle above Taylor Valley to the mouth of Green Cove Creek at Creek Junction and that portion of stream upstream

from the mouth of Straight Branch to a sign at the Forest Service boundary just downstream of Taylor Valley.

16-inch Minimum, 2 Fish Per Day

***Buffalo Creek (Rockbridge County):** From the confluence of Collier's Creek upstream 2.9 miles to the confluence of North and South Buffalo creeks.

***Dan River (Patrick County):** That portion from Talbott Dam approximately 6 miles downstream to a sign posted just upstream from the confluence of the Dan River and Townes Reservoir.

Jackson River (Bath County): From the swinging bridge located just upstream from the mouth of Muddy Run upstream 3 miles to the last ford on Forest Service Road 481D. **Note:** Multiple hook artificial lures are permitted.

Pound River (Dickenson County): That portion from a sign 0.4 miles below Flannagan Dam downstream 1.2 miles to a sign just upstream of the confluence of the Pound River and the Russell Fork River.

Roaring Run (Botetourt County): That portion from a sign at the third footbridge above the Roaring Run Furnace Day Use Area upstream approximately one mile to a sign at the Botetourt/Alleghany County line.

Smith River (Henry County): That portion of stream from signs below the east bank of Towne Creek downstream to the Rt. 666 (Trent Hill Rd.) Bridge crossing in Bassett, Virginia.

South Fork Holston River (Smyth County): That portion from a sign posted at the upper Jefferson National Forest boundary downstream approximately four miles to a sign posted 500 feet upstream of the concrete Dam at Buller Fish Culture Station.

20-inch Minimum, 1 Fish Per Day, Flyfishing Only

***Mossy Creek (Augusta County):** That portion of stream upstream from the Augusta/Rockingham county line to a sign posted at the confluence of Joseph's Spring.

Catch and Release Only

***Dan River (Patrick County):** That portion of stream and its tributaries between the Townes Dam and the Pinnacles Hydroelectric Powerhouse.



Brook trout; illustration ©Spike Knuth

East Fork Chestnut Creek (Farmers Creek) (Grayson and Carroll counties): That portion of stream and its tributaries upstream from the Blue Ridge Parkway.

North Creek (Botetourt County): That portion of stream and its tributaries upstream from a sign at the North Creek Campground.

North Fork Moormans River (Albemarle County): That portion of the stream within the Shenandoah National Park.

Rapidan River (Madison County): That portion of stream and its tributaries (including Staunton River) upstream from a sign at the lower Shenandoah National Park boundary.

Roaring Fork (Tazewell County): That portion upstream from the southwest boundary of Beartown Wilderness Area.

South Fork Holston River (Smyth County): That portion of stream from the concrete dam at Buller Fish Culture Station downstream to the lower boundary of the Buller Fish Culture Station.

Stewart's Creek (Carroll County): Within the boundaries of the Stewart's Creek Wildlife Management Area.

Delayed Harvest Waters

From October 1 through May 31 fishing on the following waters is permitted under the following regulations only:

- a. Only artificial lures may be used.
- b. No trout may be in possession (catch and release only) while fishing these waters.
- c. No bait may be in possession while fishing these waters.
- d. Trout license required October 1–June 15.

***Note:** During the period of June 1 through September 30 restrictions a. through c. above will not apply and these waters are like any other designated stocked trout water (see page 17).*

Accotink Creek (Fairfax County): That portion of stream from King Arthur Road downstream 3.1 miles to Route 620 (Brad-dock Road).

Back Creek (Bath County): That portion of stream from the Rt. 600 Bridge just below the Virginia Power Back Creek Dam down-

stream 1.5 miles to the Rt. 600 Bridge at the lower boundary of the Virginia Power Recreational Area.

Chestnut Creek (Carroll County): That portion of stream from the U.S. Rt. 58 Bridge downstream 11.4 miles to the confluence with the New River.

Hardware River (Fluvanna County): That portion of stream from the confluence with the James River upstream 3 miles to Muleshoe Bend as posted.

Holliday Creek (Appomattox/Buckingham counties): That portion of stream from the Rt. 640 crossing downstream 2.8 miles to a sign at the headwaters of Holliday Lake.

Holmes Run (Fairfax County): That portion of stream from the Lake Barcroft Dam downstream 1.2 miles to a sign posted at the Alexandria City line.

North Fork of Pound and Pound rivers (Wise County): That portion of the streams from the base of North Fork of Pound Dam downstream to the confluence with Indian Creek.

North River (Augusta County): That portion of stream from the base of Elkhorn Dam downstream 1.5 miles to a sign posted at the head of Staunton City Reservoir.

Passage Creek (Warren County): That portion of stream from the lower boundary of the Front Royal State Hatchery upstream 0.9 miles to the Shenandoah /Warren County line.

Peak Creek (Pulaski County): That portion of stream from the confluence of Tract Fork downstream 2.7 miles to the Rt. 99 Bridge.

Pedlar River (Amherst County): That portion of stream from the City of Lynchburg/George Washington National Forest boundary line (below Lynchburg Reservoir) downstream 2.7 miles to the boundary line of the George Washington National Forest.

Roanoke River (Roanoke County): That portion of stream from the Rt. 760 Bridge (Diuguids Lane) upstream 1.0 miles to a sign posted at the upper end of Green Hill Park.

Roanoke River (City of Salem): That portion of stream from the Rt. 419 Bridge upstream 2.2 miles to the Colorado Street Bridge.

South River (Augusta County): That portion of stream from Second Street Bridge

upstream 2.4 miles to the base of Rife Loth Dam in the City of Waynesboro.

Pay-As-You-Go Trout Fishing

These waters are stocked regularly with catchable trout throughout the fee permit season. Anglers are required to buy a daily permit (\$6.50) in addition to the applicable resident or non-resident license. Trout licenses are not required to fish in the areas during the fee permit season, but they are required during the non-permit period of the year. No fishing is permitted in any fee fishing area for five days proceeding the opening day (1st Saturday in April). Fishing shall begin at 9:00 a.m. on opening day at all fee areas. After opening day, fishing times will be as posted. The daily creel limit is 6 trout. Fishermen are required to use separate stringers. Bait or artificial lures may be used as posted. Children-only fishing area (where applicable) regulations are posted.

Big Tumbling Creek: Area includes Big Tumbling Creek within the Clinch Mountain Wildlife Management Area. A daily permit is required from the first Saturday in April through September 30. Directions: From Saltville, Va. turn left off of Rt. 107 onto Rt. 91 (1/4 mile); then right onto Rt. 634; bear left onto Rt. 613 and proceed 3.5 miles; then right onto Rt. 747 to the area.

Crooked Creek: Area is located within the Crooked Creek Wildlife Management Area in Carroll County. A daily permit is required from the first Saturday in April through September 30. Directions: From Galax, Va. take Rt. 58 east to Woodlawn, Va.; then take Rt. 620 south approximately 4.0 miles to the area.

Douthat State Park: Area includes Douthat State Park Lake and Wilson Creek above the lake to the park boundary and downstream to the lower USFS boundary. A daily permit is required from the first Saturday in April through June 15 and from September 15 through October 31. A children-only area is provided. Also, children 12 years and under can fish without a permit in the entire area if under the direct supervision of a permitted adult and the combined creel limit for both adult and child/children does not exceed 6 trout. Directions: Located 7 miles north of Clifton Forge on Rt. 629 which can be accessed by Exit 27 off of I-64.

Nongame Fish, Reptile, Amphibian and Aquatic Invertebrate Regulations

General

It shall be unlawful to take, possess, import, cause to be imported, export, cause to be exported, buy, sell, offer for sale or liberate within the Commonwealth any wild animal unless otherwise specifically permitted by law or regulation. Albino reptiles and amphibians and domestic animals may be imported, possessed, and sold. A list of domestic animals and the Department's official listing of "Native and Naturalized Fauna of Virginia" is available from the Richmond and regional offices.

Native and Naturalized Species

Possession Limits

(Personal Use & Not for Sale):

Amphibians and Reptiles – 5

Nongame Fish and Aquatic Invertebrates – 20

Exceptions:

1. Threatened and endangered species, candy darter, eastern hellbender, diamondback terrapin, and spotted turtle—no take
2. Carp, bowfin, longnose gar, mullet, yellow bullhead, brown bullhead, black bullhead, snail bullhead, white sucker, northern hogsucker, gizzard shad, threadfin shad, white perch, yellow perch, alewife and blueback herring [see limits under Anadromous (coastal) in table on page 16], stoneroller (hornyhead), fathead minnow, golden shiner, and goldfish—**unlimited**
3. See page 15 for catfish and page 16 for anadromous (coastal) shad and herring limits.
4. Fish bait: minnows and chubs (Cyprinidae), salamanders (less than 6 inches), crayfish, and hellgrammites – 50 in aggregate unless said person has purchased fish bait and has a receipt specifying the number of individuals purchased by species. **Note:** Mad-toms, crayfish and salamanders cannot be bought or sold.

5. Bullfrogs and snapping turtles – 15 per day.

Cannot be taken from the banks or waters of designated stocked trout waters. Taking bullfrogs with a gig or bow and arrow requires a hunting license. Taking turtles by hook and line requires a fishing license.

6. Native amphibians and reptiles, that are captured within the Commonwealth and possessed live for private use and not for sale may be liberated under the following conditions:
 - a. Period of captivity does not exceed 30 days;
 - b. Animals must be liberated at the site of capture;
 - c. Animals must have been housed separately from other wild-caught and domestic animal; and
 - d. Animals that demonstrate symptoms of disease or illness or that have sustained injury during their captivity may not be released.

Methods to Capture or Take

General Methods:

- Except as provided for under "Other Methods" and except in any waters where the use of nets is prohibited, the species listed in the previous section (Native and Naturalized Species-Possession Limits) may only be taken by hand, hook and line, with a seine not exceeding 4 feet in depth by 10 feet in length, an umbrella type net not exceeding 5 by 5 feet square, small minnow traps with throat openings no larger than 1 inch in diameter, cast nets, and handheld bow nets with diameter not to exceed 20 inches and handle length not to exceed 8 feet.
- Gizzard shad and white perch may also be taken from below the fall line in all tidal rivers of the Chesapeake Bay using a gill net in accordance with Virginia Marine Resources Commission recreational fishing regulations.
- Bullfrogs may also be taken by gigging or bow and arrow and from pri-

vate waters by firearms no larger than .22 caliber rimfire.

- Snapping turtles may be taken for personal use with hoop nets not exceeding 6 feet in length with a throat opening not exceeding 36 inches.

Other Methods:

Trot Lines, juglines or set poles may be used to take nongame fish and turtles provided they are not baited with live bait (worms are permissible), except on waters stocked with trout and within 600 feet of any dam. Live bait other than game fish may be used on trot lines to take catfish in Carroll, Dickenson, Giles, Grayson, Montgomery, Pulaski and Wythe counties, and in the Clinch River, in Russell, Scott and Wise counties.

Any person setting or possessing the above equipment shall have it clearly marked by permanent means with his or her name, address, and telephone number, and is required to check all lines and remove all fish and animals caught each day.

Bow and Arrow may be used to take common carp, northern snakehead, and gar (fishing license required) during day and night hours (24 hrs.), except from waters stocked with trout. Spearguns and poisoned arrows are prohibited. Snakehead must be immediately killed and reported to VDGIF.

Snagging, grabbing, snaring, gigging and the use of a striking iron are legal methods to take nongame fish in certain waters in certain counties as follows (see table page 16 for certain nongame fish limits):

1. In the waters of the following counties [except public impoundments, the Roanoke (Staunton) and Dan Rivers, and those waters stocked by the Department]: Amelia, Appomattox, Brunswick, Campbell, Charlotte, Cumberland, Dinwiddie, Goochland (except James River), Greenville, Halifax, Louisa, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, Nottoway, Pittsylvania, and Prince Edward.

2. From April 1 through May 15 and October 1 through November 30 during the daytime in the following waters: Buchanan County, all waters except Dismal River; Grayson County, New River; Lee County, Powell River; Russell County, Clinch River; Scott County, Clinch River and its tributaries; Tazewell County, Dry Run Creek; Wise County, Clinch River; and Washington County, Middle Fork and South Fork of the Holston rivers. Creel limit: 20 suckers per day.
3. Noosing suckers (daytime only) from December 1 through February 29 in Highland County.
4. Snagging for carp and suckers during April in Wolf and Big Walkers Creek in Giles County.
5. Snagging for carp and suckers in Walkers Creek, Wolf Creek and the North Fork of the Holston in Bland County.
6. Bow and arrow and gigging for carp year round in the Shenandoah River.
7. Shooting with a rifle for suckers and carp from April 15 to May 31 during daylight hours in the shoals of the Clinch River within the limits of Scott County except, that it shall be unlawful to shoot fish on Sunday or within the limits of any town, or from any bridge. Fishing license is required. Creel limit: 20 per day.

Dip nets may be used to take shad, herring, mullet and suckers except in designated stocked trout waters, Department-owned or controlled lakes, in certain waters where anadromous shad and herring can not be possessed (see page 16 for shad and herring limits), and as restricted below. The user and all helpers (regardless of age) must have dip net permits (\$4.50) or valid fishing license. Permits are valid in the county's inland waters for which issued. All other fish species taken are to be immediately returned to the water alive.

Herring: (see table page 16 for river herring limits) Commercial herring dipping is prohibited in Diascund Creek in New Kent County and in Ward's, Chippokes, and Powell's Creek north of State Hwy. 10.

Suckers:

Limit of 20 per day.
Season: February 15- May 15.

Dip nets shall not be more than 6 feet square. Dip net permits are not required for taking suckers in Brunswick, Greensville and Sussex counties.

Nets and Seines are prohibited while fishing in designated stocked trout waters and for taking fish from Department-owned or controlled lakes (except as otherwise posted) (see table page 16 for certain nongame fish limits). Only those nets and seines listed under general methods to capture or take nongame fish (above) can be used in the public waters of the Roanoke (Staunton) and Dan Rivers in Campbell, Charlotte, Halifax and Pittsylvania counties, and in the City of Danville. Seines, nets, and traps are also prohibited in Lick Creek in Smyth and Bland counties, Bear Creek in Smyth County, Laurel Creek in Tazewell and Bland counties, and Hungry Mother Creek above Hungry Mother Lake in Smyth County. However, these restrictions do not prohibit the use of a hand-landing net to land fish legally hooked. Seasons and local restrictions governing the use of nets and seines are complex. Persons deciding to try this type of fishing should consult with the conservation police officer stationed in the area to be fished.

Areas Restricted

Designated Stocked Trout Waters: Nongame fish may be harvested only by hook and line in designated stocked trout waters.

Mollusks: Unlawful to take mussels and the spiny riversnail (*Io fluvialis*) in the Tennessee drainage in Virginia (Clinch, Powell and the North, South and Middle Forks of the Holston rivers and tributaries). It shall be unlawful to take mussels in the James River and tributaries west of Rt. 29, in the entire North Fork of the Shenandoah River, and in the entire Nottoway River.

Salamanders: Unlawful to take salamanders in Grayson Highlands State Park and on National Forest lands in the Jefferson National Forest in those portions of Grayson, Smyth and Washington counties bounded on the east by Rt. 16, on the north by Rt. 603 and on the south and west by Rt. 58.

Non-Native (Exotic Animals)

A special permit is required and may be issued by the Department, if consistent with

the Department's fish and wildlife management program, to import, possess, or sell the following non-native (exotic) amphibians, fish, mollusks, aquatic invertebrates, and reptiles: giant or marine toad, tongueless or African clawed frog, barred tiger salamander, gray tiger salamander, blotched tiger salamander, smallmouth buffalo, bigmouth buffalo, black buffalo, piranhas, bighead carp, grass carp or white amur, red shiner, silver carp, black carp, rudd, tench, ruffe, snakeheads, air-breathing catfish, tilapia, swamp eel, tubenose goby, round goby, zebra mussel, New Zealand mudsnail, quagga mussel, rusty crayfish, Australian crayfish, Chinese mitten crab, alligators, caimans, brown tree snake, crocodiles, and gavials.

Anglers may legally possess snakehead fish taken from Virginia waters provided they immediately kill the fish and notify VDGIF (See office listings on page 4 or call 1-800-770-4951.)

All other non-native (exotic) amphibians, fish, aquatic invertebrates and reptiles not listed above may be possessed, purchased, and sold; provided, that such animals shall be subject to all applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations, including those that apply to threatened/endangered species, and further provided, that such animals shall not be liberated within the Commonwealth.

**Anadromous
(Coastal)
River Herring
Creel Limits
See table on
page 16 for
alewife and
blueback herring
limits.**

Fish Consumption Advisories

Fishing provides many benefits including food and recreational enjoyment. Many anglers keep, cook and eat their catches. Fish are routinely monitored for contaminants by the Department of Environmental Quality. While the vast majority of the state's waters have no dangerous levels of contaminants, sometimes the fish in certain waters are found to contain potentially harmful levels of chemicals. When this happens, the Department of Health issues warnings for the affected bodies of water. Because the Health Department lowered their PCB advisory level and the list of advisories often changes several times in a given year, VDGIF is no longer going to try and publish a current list in this booklet. For specific, up-to-date fish consumption advisories, please go to the Health Department Web site, www.vdh.virginia.gov/epidemiology/DEE/publictoxicology/advisories/ or call the Health Department at 804-864-8182.

Anglers should realize that they may still fish these waters and enjoy excellent recreational fishing. Below is a section on cleaning and cooking your fish, which will help reduce contamination levels in fish you eat.

Cleaning and Cooking Your Fish

Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and most other organic contaminants usually build up in a fish's fat deposits and just underneath the skin. By removing the skin and fat before cooking, you can reduce the levels of these chemicals. Mercury collects in the fish's muscle and cannot be reduced by cleaning and cooking methods. To reduce PCBs and other organics in your fish, consider cleaning and cooking your fish as described below.

- Remove all skin.
- Trim off all the fat, especially the belly flap, along the lateral line on each side of the fish, along the back, and under the skin.

- Bake or broil trimmed fish on a rack or grill. Cooking does not destroy the contaminants in fish, but heat from cooking melts some of the fat in the fish and allows some of the contaminated fat to drip away.
- Discard any drippings. Do not eat them or use them for cooking other foods or for preparing sauces or gravies.

IMPORTANT: The meal advice included in this information is based on fish that have been skinned, trimmed and cooked properly.

Also remember that larger and older fish tend to collect more contaminants, and fatty fish (such as channel catfish and carp) tend to collect PCBs and other organic chemicals. Eating smaller, younger fish and avoiding fatty species can help limit your exposure. Your exposure depends not only on the contaminant levels in the fish, but also the amount of fish you eat.

Boat Registration

All motorboats (vessels which are propelled by machinery including gasoline, diesel and electric motors) must be registered with the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (except vessels operating under a valid temporary 30-day registration certificate, vessels registered in another state and used in Virginia for less than 90 consecutive days, vessels which have a valid marine document issued by the United States Government). You must display the registration number and validation decal on each side of the forward half of the vessel. Also, you must have the valid certificate of number (registration card) on board before your boat can legally be operated on Virginia state waters.

For further information, please contact the Boat Section of the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, 4010 West Broad Street, Richmond, VA 23230-1104, (877) 898-2628 or (804) 367-6135.

Zebra Mussel Alert

Zebra mussels are small (<1") freshwater bivalves with dark and light bands on their shells. They can attach to surfaces, in clusters, leading to tremendous recreation, wildlife, and economic damage. They can be accidentally transported to Virginia by boaters and anglers, and we are counting on you to help stop the spread of zebra mussels by taking the following precautions:

- ✓ Visually inspect and scrub boat hulls, motors, anchors, and trailers, removing any attached vegetation at site of origin, then hose equipment with hot (140°F) and/or high-pressure water if possible.
- ✓ Bilges, live wells, and any other water-holding compartments should be drained at the site of origin and flushed with disinfectant or hot water.
- ✓ Boat and other equipment should remain completely dry for at least 24 hours before being used again.
- ✓ Take same precautions with waders, bait buckets, and other equipment that can hold water or comes into contact with water.

If you believe you have seen or found a zebra mussel, please contact the Department immediately at (804) 367-6913 or Brian Watson at the Department's Forest Office (434-525-7522). For more information on zebra mussels, please see our Web site at www.HuntFishVA.com.



©Brian Watson



Let's Go Fishing

Virginia offers excellent, extremely diverse freshwater angling opportunities. Over 176,000 acres of public lakes and 27,800 miles of fishable streams provide every freshwater angler something: tidal river for largemouth bass, striped bass, blue catfish and shad; unsurpassed float fishing smallmouth bass rivers spread across the state; expansive reservoirs renowned for largemouth bass, striped bass, and crappie; numerous “close-to-home” small, family fishing lakes and ponds with great chances to land bass, sunfish, and channel catfish; and phenomenal stocked and wild trout fishing in the Blue Ridge and Allegheny mountains. Following is information about fishing for major sport fish, public fishing lakes, major fishing rivers and the Trout Guide. For more detailed information about individual lakes and streams, handicapped fishing piers, lake horsepower limits, angling education programs and other aspects of fish, fishing, fishing forecasts, licenses, and regulations, go to our Web site at www.HuntFishVA.com.



Fishing workshop at Bear Creek Lake; ©DGIF

Fish Identification and Fishing Information

Largemouth Bass



Common Names: Black bass, bigmouth

Identification: Sunfish family. Basically dark greenish above fading to a whitish belly, but variable depending on the water it lives in. Shows a series of dark blotches that form a dark horizontal band along its midline to its tail. Named because of its big mouth. Upper jaw extends well beyond the eye. Dorsal fin deeply notched. Average weight is 2 to 4 lbs., with up to 10 lbs. occurring in some waters.

Best Fishing: *Lakes:* Anna, Gaston, Buggs Island, Chickahominy, Chesdin, Smith Mountain, Prince, Briery Creek, Western Branch, Witten, and Flannagan. *Rivers:* Chickahominy (below Walkers Dam), and James (below the fall line).

Fishing Techniques: Fly, medium spincasting, spinning or baitcasting rods and reels can all be used. Plastic worms and other plastic imitations, crankbaits, spinner baits, surface lures, jigs and other lures imitating minnows, crayfish, frogs, salamanders and nightcrawlers. For flyrodders, streamer flies, bucktails and large poppers. Live bait includes small bluegills, minnows of many kinds, crayfish, nightcrawlers, frogs, etc.

Smallmouth Bass



Common Names: Black bass, bronzeback

Identification: Sunfish family. Coppery-brown above, with greenish-brown sides with darker vertical bars. Three dark bars radiate from the eye on the cheek and gill cover. Dorsal fin is not as deeply notched as the largemouth. Upper jaw extends back only in line with the middle of the eye. A fish in the 4 or 5 lb. range is considered a trophy.

Best Fishing: *Lakes:* Claytor, Smith Mountain, Philpott, Moomaw, and South Holston. *Rivers:* James (above the fall line), New, South Fork, North Fork and mainstem Shenandoah, Rappahannock (above the fall line), Maury, North Fork Holston, and Clinch.

Fishing Techniques: Fly, spinning, spincasting and baitcasting rods and reels with 4 to 8 pound test line are all suitable for taking this scrappiest of freshwater gamefish. Live crayfish, hellgrammites, “spring lizards” (salamanders), madtoms, and minnows are best live baits. Artificials include jigs, small crankbaits, small spinner-bucktail combos, minnow and crayfish imitations. For fly rodding, hair bugs, poppers, and streamers are good.

Spotted Bass



Common Name: Kentucky bass

Identification: Sunfish family. Much like the largemouth and the smallmouth, it is called the “in-between” species. It is distinguished from the smallmouth by the dark, blotchy lateral band from head to tail. The back of spotted bass’ upper jaw lines up with the middle rear of the eye, while largemouth jaws extends past the eye. It derives its name from the black spots on its belly scales. Most are about 1 lb. or less.

Best Fishing: *Lakes:* Claytor, Hungry Mother, and North Fork Pound. *Rivers:* Appomattox, New, Pamunkey, and South and North Anna.

Fishing Techniques: Light to medium spincasting and spinning outfits and medium bait casting rods and reels. Similar baits as for largemouth, but smaller. Spinnerbaits, top water plugs, crankbaits and fly rod popping bugs.

Crappie

Common Names: papermouth, Calico bass, specks, speckled perch

Identification: Sunfish family. There are



Black crappie



White crappie

two species of crappie—the black and the white. The black crappie is covered with dark, irregular blotches and has seven—rarely eight—dorsal

spines. It shows more yellow and green on its sides and its caudal (tail) and anal fins are heavily flecked. The white crappie has six dorsal spines—rarely five—and it has noticeable vertical bars on its silvery sides as well as a light pearlescent color or iridescent blue and lavender. Both have protruding lower jaws.

Best Fishing: *Lakes:* Buggs Island, Chesdin, Chickahominy, Cohoon, Anna, Smith Mountain, Prince, Gaston, Claytor, Brittle, Moomaw, Orange, Burke, South Holston, and Western Branch. *Rivers:* tidal Chickahominy and its tributaries, tidal James, and South Fork Shenandoah.

Fishing Techniques: Light spinning or spincasting rods and reels with tiny jigs, doll flies, streamers, small crankbaits that imitate minnows, small spoons and spinner-bucktail combinations, and spinner-grubs. Best live baits are small to medium minnows.

Bluegill

Common Names: Bream, bluegill sunfish, sun perch.



Identification: Sunfish family. Colors are variable. Dark green, olive-green, olive brown, or

bluish-black on its back, fading to yellowish-green or silvery. Normally has five to seven vertical bars extending down on each side. Lower parts of its cheek and gill cover are bluish. Its “throat” is yellow on females to bright orange on the male, brighter during spawning. Has a black, ear-like flap on its opercle (gill cover) and a black blotch at the back base of its spiny dorsal fin. Typically under 1lb. in Virginia.

Best Fishing: *Lakes:* Western Branch, Prince, Cohoon, Chickahominy, Robertson, Gatewood, Briery Creek, Burke, and many others.

Fishing Techniques: A number 8 or 10 hook baited with soft crickets, small nymphs, garden worms, red wigglers, pieces of night crawlers, other grubs and caterpillars on an ultralight spinning or spin-casting outfit, fly rod or cane pole provides a lot of fun. Toward evening, in summer, when the shallows cool, bluegills come into shore to feed. When using bait, fish shallow with a small, light bobber in spring, deep near structure in hot summer with no bobber and lightly weighted. Effective artificials include poppers, nymphs, wet and dry flies of many types, rubber spiders, grasshoppers and crickets, and tiny jigs. Flyrodding for bluegills is especially rewarding.

Redear Sunfish

Common Names: Shellcracker

Identification:

Sunfish family.

Yellow-green or olive, with faint vertical bars and random dark

spots. During spawning, the margin of the male's gill cover flap turns bright red. Body is rounded like other sunfish and has a relatively small mouth. Pectoral fins are long and pointed. They grow faster and larger than other sunfish; 1 lb. fish not uncommon and often reaching 2 lbs.

Best Fishing: *Lakes:* Cohoon, Meade, Prince, Little Creek, Chickahominy, Robertson, Western Branch, Lone Star, and Briery Creek. *Rivers:* Nottoway.

Fishing Techniques: Best time to catch redears is in the spring when they come up to the spawning beds. Being bottom feeders, most redears are caught by letting live nymphs, red wigglers or garden worms lie on the bottom near shore. Artificial jigs and grubs fished slowly and near the bottom will work as well.

Redbreast Sunfish

Common Names: Yellowbreast sunfish, redbelly, red throat.

Identification: Sunfish family. Basically olive to brownish gray along the back, merg-



Redbreast sunfish

ing to blue with a golden cast along its sides and a bright orange to yellow underside. Has several irregular bluish stripes on its cheek and gill cover. Identifiable by a long, black opercular(gill) flap. Reaches about 8 inches.

Best Fishing: South Fork Shenandoah, Nottoway, Rapidan, Rappahannock, Maury and Cowpasture rivers.

Fishing Techniques: Small spinner baits, spinner bucktails, grubs and tiny crankbaits. Spring and fall are the best times, but they are active throughout the summer.

Pumpkinseed

Common Names: Pond perch, sun perch, sunny.

Identification: Sunfish family. Dark, olive-green on its back, with mottled sides. Base color of sides, yellowish, spotted with orange, red and blue. Its belly is yellow to bright orange. Cheeks and gill covers marked with alternate worm-shaped bands of blue-green and yellow. Bluish-black gill cover flaps are edged with white, yellow, orange or blue, with a small half moon spot of red. Average 4 to 6 inches.

Best Fishing: Most lakes, ponds and rivers. Best time to catch them is in spring and early summer when they move into the shallows to spawn, but are cooperative even in the hot summertime and is commonly caught near shore throughout the warmer months.

Fishing Techniques: Relatively easy to catch. Small garden worms, red wigglers, various grubs and crickets are good live baits. An ultralight spinning or spin-cast rod and reel is ideal rigged with 4 to 6 lb. line, lightly weighted and fitted with a small bobber is the best outfit for sunfish. Simply cast to openings in aquatic vegetation, the edges of aquatic vegetation or gravel clearings near shore. They will hit artificials, such as wet flies and nymphs, but fish them a little slower than other sunfish species.



Green Sunfish

Common Names: Blue sunfish

Identification:

Sunfish fami-

ly. Basic-

ally

bluish

green in

color, with faint,

alternating blue, brown

and brassy gold stripes. Olive colored on its

head with pale blue spots and wavy lines on

its upper lip. Has a dark opercle (gill flap)

spot and some orange and yellow-olive on

its lower fins. Is a stocky, thick fish with a

large head and large mouth.



Best Fishing: Small lakes, pond or quiet coves on large reservoirs where they have been introduced.

Fishing Techniques: A ready striker of any small crankbait, spinnerbait, wet or dry flies as well as live nymphs, minnows and worms. Fish close up against the shore, often under the smallest of overhanging banks, or small dugout areas along a shallow shore.

Rock Bass

Common Names: Redeye, goggle eye and rock sunfish.



Identification: Sunfish family. Short, robust body and fairly large mouth. Lower jaw protrudes slightly. Back is olive-green with sides tarnished gold or brassy colored. Each scale has a dark central spot. Large spots on its lower body forms a striped-like appearance. Has a discernable dark outline on its anal fin. Has wide vertical blotches on its sides and a dark spot on its cheek. Average 6 to 8 inches, but will reach 12 to 14 inches and 1.5 to 2 lbs. Cheeks with obvious scales.

Best Fishing: *Lakes:* Smith Mountain, Moomaw, and Laurel Bed. *Rivers:* Roanoke, New, Jackson, Maury, James, Bullpasture, Calpasture, Buffalo, North Fork Shenandoah and Clinch.

Fishing Techniques: Voracious feeders that readily strike spinners, jigs, small crankbaits and flies. Favored live baits include minnows, crayfish, nightcrawlers, mayfly nymphs and hellgrammites.

fish illustrations by Duane Raver/USFWS

Roanoke Bass

Common Names: Redeye, rock bass.

Identification: Sunfish family. Robust body much like the rock bass but with dark, olive-green to olive-brown back, fading to grayish sides and white belly. Has smaller scale spots than the rock bass and lighter, small whitish or yellowish spots on its upper body. Has a slightly concave outline over the eyes. Cheeks scaleless or nearly so.

Best Fishing: *Lakes:* Leesville and Smith Mountain. Most of the trophy “rock bass” registered by anglers are really Roanoke bass. *Rivers:* Nottoway, Roanoke/Staunton, and Blackwater and Pigg of the Roanoke drainage.

Fishing Techniques: Spinning and spincasting with small to medium spinner baits, small spoons and crankbaits. Live baits include minnows, crayfish, and worms.

Flier

Common Names: Round sunfish, millpond flier.

Identification: Sunfish family. A deep-bodied, almost round fish, with many spines on both dorsal and anal fins. Color is a yellow-green or brassy-olive to brownish-gold, with a dark brown to black spot on each scale, appearing as rows of spots. A dark vertical streak extends downward from the eye to the lower edge of its cheek. It has large, rounded fins, much like a crappie, with a head and mouth similar in shape to a bluegill's. Slow growing, they reach up to 10 inches in length.

Best Fishing: *Lakes:* Drummond, Airfield, Kilby, Cohoon, Meade, Lee Hall, and Motts Run. *Rivers:* Dismal Swamp Canal, Nottoway, and Blackwater.

Fishing Techniques: Most are probably caught incidentally by fishermen fishing for crappies in early spring. They will hit dry and wet flies, as well as small minnows and worms using typical small panfish rigs. Fish around stumps, sunken brush, cypress trunks and knees, and near or under bridges.

Warmouth

Common Names: Openmouth, warmouth bass, Indian fish.

Identification: Sunfish family. A large-mouthed, robust fish with mottled sides and wavy lines on its cheek. Basically dark brownish above, with mottled and barred sides, and mottled or spotted fins. Can be olive-brown colored with greenish cast. Seldom gets larger than 8 or 9 inches.

Best Fishing: Numerous small lakes, ponds such as lakes Orange, Lee Hall, and Airfield; and slow-moving, swampy rivers and streams, such as Dragon Run and Nottoway.

Fishing Techniques: Caught incidental to other fishing activities. Will take a variety of small artificials, as well as worms, small crayfish and minnows.

White Bass



Common Names: Silver bass, linesides

Identification: Temperate “true” bass family. Light greenish back, light yellowish-green to silver sides to a silvery-white below, 6 to 8 horizontal faint stripes; stripes below lateral line are broken; the first stripe below the lateral line is not complete to tail. Deep-bodied with distinctively arched back, considerably smaller than its striped bass cousin. Single spine on gill cover; variable patch of teeth on tongue. Commonly reaches 0.5 to 2 lbs.

Best Fishing: *Lakes:* Buggs Island, Smith Mountain, Claytor, and Leesville. *Rivers:* New, and the Dan and Staunton (during spawning).

Fishing Techniques: Spinning or spincasting outfits with live minnows, or artificials imitating minnows, including jigs, spinner baits, streamers, spinner-bucktails, crankbaits and spoons. Caught during the spawning runs, also below dams in the tail-races, and by jump fishing schools in open water.

Striped Bass



Common Names: Striper, rockfish

Identification: True bass family. Stream-lined, elongated body; coloration shades from dark olive above through silvery sides to a white belly; 7 to 8 prominent unbroken black stripes originate behind the head and extend to the tail; more prominent than on the white bass. Two spines on the gill cover; two patches of teeth on tongue. Ten to 15 lb. fish are common with 30 to 40 +lb. fish landed each season.

Best Fishing: *Lakes:* Smith Mountain, Buggs Island, Anna, Claytor, Gaston, Leesville and Western Branch. *Rivers:* Staunton/Roanoke, Dan, and all tidal rivers.

Fishing Techniques: Heavy baitcasting, spincasting or spinning outfits with a good backbone and 15 to 25 pound test line. Live bait includes large minnows or gizzard or threadfin shad. Large feathered or plastic jig combinations, spoons, crankbaits that imitate shad or other fish and bucktails. Trolling, drift fishing, jump fishing or deep jigging are usual fishing methods.

Hybrid Striped Bass



Common Names: Hybrid, hybrid striper

Identification: This is a striped bass x white bass cross, with a body shape between that of striper and white bass. Silvery-white with up to 8 dark broken stripes; first stripe below lateral line complete to tail. Tongue tooth patches are intermediate between white and striped bass. Typically less than 10 lbs.

Best Fishing: *Lakes:* Claytor and Flannagan.

Fishing Techniques: Tackle and techniques very similar to striped bass, but often with a little lighter tackle. Shiners and a variety of spoons, crankbaits, and jigs are favorite baits.

White Perch

Common Names: Stiffback, silver perch

Identification: Not really a perch, but a member of the temperate bass family along with white and striped bass.

Averages 8 to 10 inches but reaches up to 2 lbs. Silver gray above, fading to silvery-white below with no longitudinal lines. Has a deep notch between spiny dorsal and soft-rayed dorsal. No teeth on tongue.

Best Fishing: *Lakes:* Western Branch, Whitehurst, Gaston, Buggs Island, Motts Run, Occoquan, Anna, Waller Mill Reservoir, Harwoods Mill Reservoir, and Back Bay. *Rivers:* Tidal rivers (Pamunkey, James, Rappahannock, Chickahominy, Mattaponi, North Landing, Northwest and Potomac) and most of their tributary creeks.

Fishing Techniques: Live bait such as minnows, grass shrimp and blood worms, plus artificials such as small spinner baits and jigs. Fish near structure such as old wharves, pilings, and sunken logs on a falling tide, which moves baitfish and shrimp out of cover.



Walleye



Common Names: Walleyed pike, jack.

Identification: Largest member of the perch family (*Percidae*). Grows up to 21 inches, 3 and 4 lbs. by age three. Brassy-olive sides flecked with green and gold, and mottled by 6 to 8 obscure markings on top, white belly. Dorsal fins completely separate and unmarked, except for a distinct dark blotch at the rear base of the front dorsal fin. White blotch on tip of lower tail fin. The eye has a milky cornea, hence the name walleye.

Best Fishing: *Lakes:* Flannagan, South Holston, Gaston (especially below Kerr Dam), Philpott, Whitehurst, Hungry Mother, and Brittle. *Rivers:* New, Staunton/Roanoke, South Holston, Clinch and Dan.

Fishing Techniques: Jigs dressed with plastic grubs or tipped with live bait work well, especially in cold water. Three to five-inch minnow plugs are very effective when walleyes move into shallow water. Crankbaits and jigging spoons work well when walleyes are deep. Trolling with night-crawler harnesses (spinner rigs) is the preferred method in reservoirs during the summer months. Live baits such as minnows, shad or nightcrawlers are always a good option for walleye.

Yellow Perch



Common Names: Ringed perch, raccoon perch, striped perch.

Identification: Member of the perch family, which includes the walleye, sauger and numerous small darters. Generally olive-green above, fading down the sides to green or yellow-green, to yellow or golden yellow. Has eight vertical dusky bars on its side and a silvery underside. Dorsal fins have a distinctive dusky blotch. Ventral and anal fins are yellow to orange, turning a bright orange on breeding males. Average 6 to 8 inches, but commonly reach 14 to 15 inches and 1.5 to 2 lbs.

Best Fishing: Brackish-water tributaries of the Chesapeake Bay. Top waters here include Machodoc, Maddox, Aquia and Occoquan creeks. *Lakes:* Western Branch, Prince, Waller Mill, Little Creek, Holliday, Moomaw and Claytor. *Rivers:* Potomac, Rappahannock, Chickahominy, Nottoway and New.

Fishing Techniques: Ready feeders, but cautious biters and slow movers. Locate schools of fish by drift fishing or use deep jigging methods. Small minnows are the best overall bait. Other popular live baits include mummichogs, mayfly nymphs, worms and grubs. They'll also hit fish eyes, cut bait and pork rind, as well as artificials tipped with some of the above, including small spoons, spoon hooks, spinners, bucktails, spinner baits and streamers.

Sauger



Common Names: Sand pike, jack salmon.

Identification: A member of the perch family, very similar to walleye. Its best identifying marks are its spotted spiny dorsal. Its body colors are more of a dusky-brown to yellowish-olive, with large, irregular patches on its side, peppered in between with smaller dark markings and a white underside. Very slim build in comparison to walleye. Has a silvery, reflective eye similar to the walleye's, and a mouth full of canine teeth. When handled, it flares out its gills, flattens its head and shivers as if bracing itself for the hook removal. Typically 10 to 19 inches.

Best Fishing: *Rivers:* Clinch and Powell.

Fishing Techniques: Minnows are the best bait. Sauger tend to feed on or near the bottom. Some of the best fishing is below dams in the tailwaters. Early morning and evening are best times. They will hit fairly large minnows and are "lazy" hitters. Are quite adept at "stealing" bait. Will hit spoons, jigs or spinners, especially if tipped with a minnow.

Northern Pike



Common Names: Pike, pickerel, jackfish.

Identification: Member of the pike family (*Esocidae*). A long, lean body, generally olive or dark green above fading to a light olive or gray-green to yellowish-green then to white on its belly. Its sides have light yellowish bean-shaped spots the length of its body. Strongly toothed jaws have teeth arranged in rows, plus rows of teeth located on its tongue and palate; they angle inward so its prey cannot get loose. Cheek is fully scaled, gill cover is only half scaled.

Best Fishing: *Lakes:* Occoquan, Motts Run, and Arrowhead (Page County).

Fishing Techniques: Still-fishing with large minnows or other baitfish, or casting or trolling with large spoons, spinner-bucktails or crankbaits.

fish illustrations by Duane Raver/USFWS

Chain Pickerel



Common Names: Chainsides, jackpike, pike.

Identification: A member of the pike family, it is named for its chain-like markings on its sides. Also has a black vertical mark under its eye. Normally its fin is unmarked. Averages 1.5 to 3 lbs. Fully scaled on both cheek and gill cover.

Best Fishing: *Lakes:* Chickahominy, Gaston, Western Branch, Diascund, Burnt Mills, Prince, Anna, Cohoon, Little Creek, Moomaw, Douthat and many other rivers, ponds and lakes. *Rivers:* Nottoway, Blackwater, Chickahominy, and Dragon Run.

Fishing Techniques: Best time is from October through March. Most active when water temperatures are 55° to 70°F. Spinners, spoons, bucktails, jigs, pork rind baits, and a variety of crankbaits will take pickerel. Minnows are the best live bait. Fish the edges of weed beds, lily pad beds, sunken brush, or tree stumps.

Muskellunge



Common Names: Musky, muskie

Identification: Largest member of the pike family. Normally olive to dark gray on its back, with grayish to bluish to yellowish sides. Sides may have faint vertical bars, spots or blotches.

Feeding Habits: Muskies eat mainly other fishes, especially soft-rayed species such as suckers, carp and shad, but also frogs, ducklings, muskrats and other mammals.

Best Fishing: *Lakes:* Smith Mountain, Claytor, Rural Retreat, Hungry Mother, Burke, and Flannagan. *Rivers:* James, Clinch, Shenandoah and New.

Fishing Techniques: River fishermen use small boats with electric motors or small outboards to float larger pools and fish shoreline snags and submerged brush. Heavy bait casting rods and reels with 30+

lb. test line is used. Using large hooks, 4/0 or larger, some anglers simply allow 8 or 12-inch suckers, shad or carp to swim free. Muskies are commonly caught in lakes by trolling deep water with large crankbaits, spoons and spinner-bucktail combinations. Early in the year, try trolling across shallow points.

Rainbow Trout



Common Names: Rainbow

Identification: The variety of rainbows has resulted in a variety of colors, hues and markings. Normally the back is olive-green with a silvery cast on its sides fading to a silvery-white belly. A pinkish or light rosy red band extends from its cheek to near its tail. Normally, they are well spotted with black spots, but vary from large spots to tiny specks to no markings at all.

Best Fishing: Well established in streams of the southwestern region of the state and are found in a myriad of mountain streams in western Virginia. *Lakes:* Moomaw. *Rivers and Streams:* Smith River, Elk Creek, Dan River, Potts Creek, Cripple Creek, Roanoke River, Little Reed Island Creek, Jackson River, Crooked Creek and Big Tumbling Creek, and many others on both sides of the Blue Ridge. Some good wild streams are Whitetop Laurel, Fox Creek, and the South Fork Holston River.

Fishing Techniques: Hits dry flies, wet flies, streamers, nymphs, small spinners and spinner-bucktails, spoons, as well as worms, live nymphs, minnows and salmon eggs. Hatchery trout readily take kernel corn and colored marshmallows. Berkeley Power Baits that give off a scent and can be shaped on the hook are used extensively by anglers.

Brown Trout



Common Names: English brown trout, German brown trout, European trout.

Identification: Colors vary widely. Natural wild browns are olive-brown on the back,

lighter on the sides, brilliant yellow-gold on their underside, with yellowish-green, unspotted fins. They have numerous black or dark brown spots on their sides, along with a sprinkling of red spots encircled with light blue rings. Hatchery-reared browns tend to be more silvery with dark brownish above with light yellow undersides and spots of a lighter shade.

Best Fishing: *Lakes:* Moomaw. *Rivers and Streams:* Little River, Mossy Creek, Potts Creek, Back Creek, Jackson River, Smith River and a wide array of others on either side of the Blue Ridge and in southwestern Virginia.

Fishing Techniques: Will rise to dry flies as well as hitting wet flies, streamers and nymphs. Worms, live nymphs, minnows and salmon eggs are good too. Brown trout tend to be bigger “meat eaters” in that they’ll take larger live baits more readily and will hit spinners, spinner bucktail combinations, as well as small crankbaits and spoons. Live baits and wet flies are normally fished downstream while dry flies are fished upstream.

Brook Trout



Common Names: Native, brookie, mountain trout, speckled trout.

Identification: Most colorful of our trout. Back is a dark olive-green with light wavy or wormy markings. Sides are lighter, sometimes with a bluish cast, yellowish spots and red spots with a light blue halo around them. Belly is white with bright orange fins. Fins have outer edges of white with a black line separating it from the orange. Ten to 16 inches and 1 to 2 lbs. is a good-sized brookie. Native brookies seldom grow beyond 12 inches in Virginia streams.

Best Fishing: Over 400 streams or portions of streams contain brook trout. Many of the streams and ponds in the Shenandoah National Park and the George Washington and Jefferson National Forest have native brook trout. *Lakes:* Laurel Bed, Coles Creek and Mill Creek reservoirs, Lexington City Reservoir and Switzer Lake. *Rivers and Streams:* Crooked Creek, Little Stoney Creek, Rapidan River, Rose River, Hughes River, Jeremy's Run, Laurel Fork and Dry River.

Fishing Techniques: For the purist, dry flies, wet flies, streamers and nymphs are used. Nymphs early in the season, dry flies when the natural insects hatch. Live bait anglers use garden worms and caddis, mayfly and stonefly nymphs also early in the year when these aquatic larvae are available naturally. In deep pools, small minnows may be effective year round.

Flathead Catfish



Common Names: Mud cat, shovelhead cat, yellow cat.

Identification: Broadly flattened head with a lower jaw that projects beyond the upper jaw. Tail only slightly notched and adipose fin is relatively large. Body is yellowish or cream-colored with black, dark brown or olive-brown mottling on back and sides, fading to dirty white or yellow. Younger fish have darker, bolder markings and the upper tip of the tails have white, triangular patches.

Best Fishing: *Lakes:* Occoquan, Claytor, Flannagan, and Buggs Island. *Rivers:* James, New, Staunton/Roanoke rivers and Occoquan Creek.

Fishing Techniques: Use live bait since they aren't easily attracted to catfish baits normally used for other catfish, although chicken entrails, nightcrawlers, and minnows work well. Usually caught on the bottom of deep pools or in tailraces below dams.

Blue Catfish



Common Names: Forked-tailed cat, hump-back blue, chucklehead

Identification: Heavy-bodied with a wide head and high spot forward of center near the head called the dorsal hump. Upper jaw projects well beyond the lower. Bluish-gray body above, fading to white on sides and belly. No spots and a deeply forked tail. Blue cats are often confused with channel catfish.

Small channel cats typically will have spots lacking in small blue cats. However, large channel cats and medium-sized blue cats can be more difficult to tell apart, often having similar coloration and general body shape. The margin, or edge, of the anal fin can be used to identify these fish: blue cats have an anal fin with a very straight margin, in channel cats the anal fin has a rounded margin. Biologists and anglers can definitively distinguish between the two species by counting anal fin rays; 30-35 rays in the blue cat's anal fin verses the channel cat's 25 to 29 rays.

Best Fishing: *Lakes:* Buggs Island. *Rivers:* James, Mattaponi, Pamunkey, Rappahannock, Staunton and Appomattox.

Fishing Techniques: March through May are the best months, but they are caught year round. Use heavy tackle with cut bait, live herring, shad, or peeler crabs. Best at night or low-light conditions.

Channel Catfish



Common Names: Spottedcatfish, speckled catfish, silver catfish, fork-tailed catfish.

Identification: Deeply forked tail. Upper jaw is longer than, and overlaps the lower. When small, its smooth-skinned body is usually spotted; however, these spots disappear in older fish (can be confused with blue catfish, see identification of blue catfish). Has a small dorsal fin with stiff spine standing high on its back. Varies in color, although generally dark brownish to slate-gray on top, fading to light brownish-gray on the sides. Has 25 to 29 rays in its anal fin.

Best Fishing: *Lakes:* Buggs Island, Gaston, South Holston, Claytor, Anna, Chesdin, Flannagan, and most small public lakes. *Rivers:* Rappahannock, Appomattox, Chickahominy, Mattaponi, Pamunkey, New, Shenandoah and North Landing.

Fishing Techniques: Rod and reel anglers catch them on clam snouts, peeler crabs, large minnows, nightcrawlers, cut herring, chicken livers or entrails, shrimp, and a variety of stink or dough baits. They take a variety of artificials including crankbaits, jigs and spinners. Best at night or low-light conditions.

White Catfish



Common Names: Forked-tailed cat

Identification: Has a moderately forked tail, a stocky body with its upper jaw extending slightly beyond lower. Color is basically blue-gray above, fading to gray on its sides with a white underside. Occasionally mottled light gray on its sides. Average 8 to 18 inches, rarely 20.

Best Fishing: Tidal rivers such as the Potomac, Rappahannock, James, and York and numerous lakes in southeast and central Virginia.

Fishing Techniques: Many of the same methods used for other catfish. Worms, minnows and scented baits fished on or near the bottom.

American Shad



Common Names: White shad, roe shad

Identification: Largest of the river herring family, American shad average around 3 lbs., with fish up to 5 lbs. common. Silversided with greenish-blue back; deep bodied from the side, narrow and symmetrical top to bottom head-on; row of dark spots on the sides, running back from the gill cover; the upper and lower jaws are equal length when the mouth is closed.

Best Fishing: *Rivers:* James (Richmond fall line area), Mattaponi, Pamunkey, Meherrin, and Nottoway.

Fishing Techniques: Harvest of American shad is not legal; catch and release only. Best time from mid-March to early May in fall line areas of tidal rivers as adults return to spawn. Light spincasting rods and reels, with 1/32 to 1/8 oz., brightly colored shad darts, spoons, jigs, or small minnow imitation lures. Fly fishing with darts, gold or white soft-bodied streamers, and other wet

flies. Increased success in deeper water; do not usually jump but give a good fight; need to be carefully played to avoid tearing delicate mouth.

Hickory Shad



Common Names: Hickory, silver shad

Identification: River herring family, averaging around 1 lb., with fish up to 2 lbs. common. Silver-sided with grayish-green back and a prominent dark spot, followed by a row of lighter spots (especially when fresh) on the upper part of the side just behind the gill cover; body long but compressed, asymmetrical top to bottom and in cross section it is wedge-shaped; the lower jaw protrudes significantly beyond the upper jaw when the mouth is closed. Each scale on the sides has a small dark spot.

Best Fishing: *Rivers:* Rappahannock (fall line area in Fredericksburg), James (Richmond fall line area), Appomattox, Chickahominy (below Walker's Dam), Mattaponi, Pamunkey, and Nottoway.

Fishing Techniques: Because stocks are depressed, harvest is illegal above the tidal river fall lines and DGIF encourages catch and release fishing below fall lines. Mid-March into May with spring spawning run, arriving earlier than American shad. Light spin casting using very small, brightly colored shad darts, spoons, jigs, or minnow imitation lures. Fly fishing with darts, gold or white streamers, and other wet flies. Often taken near the surface, will "tail-walk" and sometimes jump.

Blueback Herring & Alewife

Common Names: River herring

Identification: Blueback herring and alewife are almost identical looking; the best way to tell them apart is an internal difference, blueback have a black membrane that lines the abdominal cavity and alewife have a light colored one with few, scattered spots. Blueback are bluish along the back with a silvery head; alewife is grayish-blue above, with a bronze head. Maximum length is 12 to 15 inches and less than 1 lb.



Blueback herring



Alewife

Fishing: Because stocks are depressed there is no harvest permitted in the waters flowing into North Carolina (Meherrin, Nottoway, Blackwater, North Landing and Northwest rivers and their tributaries plus Back Bay) and a harvest moratorium is being considered for all waters of the Chesapeake Bay (check current VMRC regulations, 1-800-541-4646).

Longnose Gar



Common Names: Billy gar, billfish, garfish, garpike

Identification: Living relic of prehistoric past; family dates back 245 million years. Nothing in Virginia is even remotely similar to the gar. The long narrow beak-like jaw, laden with sharp teeth, is the unmistakable feature. Very long, cylindrical fish with dorsal and anal fins set well back on the body, and a large rounded tail fin; note the armament of very large, hard, sharp, bony scales. Brownish-olive on its back, fading to yellowish- or olive-green to white on its belly; 2 to 3 ft in length is not uncommon.

Best Fishing: *Lakes:* Western Branch, Prince, Chickahominy and Buggs Island. *Rivers:* Chickahominy, Pamunkey, James and Rappahannock.

Fishing Techniques: Large minnows are best on medium to heavy casting and spinning tackle. They are adept at stripping bait from hooks and difficult to hook in their bony jaw. Feed at night, especially moonlit nights.

fish illustrations by Duane Raver/USFWS

Bowfin

Common Names: Grindle, grinnel

Identification: Bowfin are living relics, with primitive roots back 70 million years ago. Has a long, soft-rayed dorsal which arches in a bow over most of the length of its body. Tail is rounded, with distinct black spot rimmed with orange on males; black spot on females faint or absent and no orange rim. Its back and sides are brownish-green or olive-green, with mottled sides fading to yellowish or white. During spawning, its underside turns a bright yellow-green. Has a cylindrical body and a wide flattened head, almost snake-like, with deep-set dark eyes. Snout is rounded with short nasal barbels. Mouth is large and has conical-shaped teeth. **Note:** While the bowfin shares similar coloration and body shape with the northern



snakehead (recently introduced to the Potomac River), the anal fin of a bowfin is much shorter than that of the snakehead, and snakeheads will not have the spot found on bowfin.

Best Fishing: *Lakes:* Chickahominy, Little Creek and Diascund. *Rivers:* Chickahominy, Mattaponi, Pamunkey, Nottoway and Blackwater.

Fishing Techniques: They are strong, muscular fighters and strike viscously at all manner of live bait and many artificials. Often fools an angler into thinking it's whipped, and then suddenly explodes back into life. Minnows and a variety of jigs are best baits. Spinner baits and bass jigs work well for summertime bowfin; in winter, vertical jigging spoons and blade baits can be effective. Use a good stiff rod with at least 15 lb test line. Steel leaders may be necessary and don't try to lip hold these fish! Food value is generally considered poor.

Common Carp

Common Names: German carp, European carp, mud bass, buglemouth bass.

Identification: Largest member of the minnow family. Thick bodied, with a brassy sheen, humped back, very large scales, large lips, barbels extending from lips, and spines on the front of dorsal and anal fins. Commonly attain 15 to 20 lbs.



Common carp

Best Fishing: *Lakes:* Western Branch, Claytor and Prince. *Rivers:* Rappahannock, Pamunkey, Chickahominy, Potomac, Shenandoah and James.

Fishing Techniques: Common carp have acute senses of hearing, smell and taste, and are very skittish in clear water. They will bite in hot summer when other fish are not very active, but are a challenge to catch on hook and line. Carp often go on feeding sprees after a rain. Sometimes it pays to chum an area with kernel corn, oatmeal, cooked vegetables or similar materials. Baits include bread dough balls, canned corn or peas, marshmallows, cheese mixed with cotton to keep it on the hook, and worms. Baits must lie on unobstructed bottom. Tackle is usually a spinning, spincasting or casting rod at least 6 feet long with plenty of backbone; reels should be fitted with at least 100 yds. of 12 to 30 lb. test line. Hooks from #2 down to #10 are favored, and a sliding sinker should be used because of the carp's wariness.

Freshwater Drum



Common Names: Drum, sheepshead

Identification: Freshwater drum have a humped back, stout body and large scales. The fins and body are silvery brown. The trailing edge of the caudal fin is rounded or almost triangular.

Best Fishing: *Rivers:* Clinch and Powell. *Lakes:* Buggs Island.

Fishing Techniques: Most anglers use live bait (crayfish and small minnows), but drum will hit artificial lures that imitate their preferred prey. Light or medium tackle is best. Fish on the bottom in deeper pools in rivers or on drop-offs and points in Buggs Island Lake.

fish illustrations by Duane Raver/USFWS

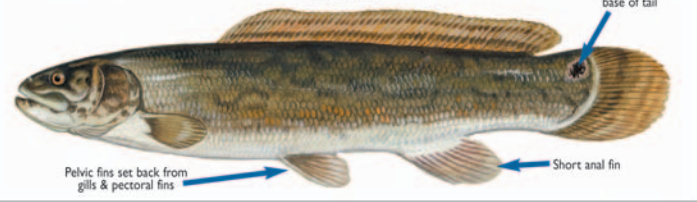
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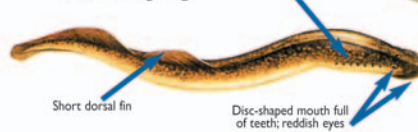


Similar-Appearing Native Species

Bowfin



Sea Lamprey



American Eel



If you find a snakehead fish, do NOT release it. Kill the fish, put it on ice, and immediately contact the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries toll-free at 1-800-770-4951.

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Public Lakes Guide

For more information: www.HuntFishVA.com/fishing

Region 1 – Eastern Virginia

Lakes, Size & Location	Permit Req.	Boat Ramp	Picnic Facil.	Gas Motor	Boat Rental	Handi. Facil.	Conces. Facil.	LMB BG	CF	CRP	SB	CP	YP
Beaverdam Swamp Reservoir (635 ac) Rt. 17 to Rt. 616.	Fee	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•			
Chandler's Millpond (75 ac) on Rt. 3 just south of Westmoreland State Park.		•						•	•	•			
Chickahominy Reservoir (1,230 ac) I-64 east to Providence Forge (Rt. 60 E) off Rt. 649.	Fee	•		•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Diascund Reservoir (1,110 ac) I-64 east to Providence Forge (Rt. 60 E) off Rt. 603.		•						•	•	•		•	•
Gardy's Mill Pond (75 ac) Rt. 202 west of Callao.		•						•	•	•		•	
Harwood's Mill Reservoir (265 ac) Rt. 17 - Rt. 173.	Fee	•	•		WD		WD	•	•	•			•
Harrison Lake (82 ac) Rt. 5 to Rt. 658. (Harrison Lake National Fish Hatchery)		•	•	5 HP		•		•		•		•	
Lake Maury (165 ac) Intersection of Rt. 60 and Rt. 17.	•		•		•	•	•	•	•	•			•
Lee Hall Reservoir (230 ac) Rt. 143 Newport News. (757) 886-7912.	Fee	•	•		WD		WD	•	•	•		•	•
Little Creek Reservoir (947 ac) Rt. 60 E to Rt. 603 to Rt. 610 E off Lakeview Drive.	Fee	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Sandy Bottom Park Pond (12 ac) Intersection of I-64 and Big Bethel Road.			•		•	•	•	•		•			
Waller Mill Reservoir (360 ac) Rt. 143 to Rt. 645.	Fee	•	•		•		•	•	•	•	•		•
Woodstock Pond (7.5 ac) York River State Park east of Croaker Rt. 606.			•		•		•	•		•			

Key

Fee - Permit available at reservoir

WD - Weekends only

LMB/BG - Largemouth Bass/Bluegill

CF - Catfish

CRP - Crappie

SB - Striped Bass

CP - Chain Pickerel

YP - Yellow Perch

For more information contact:

VDGIF

3801 John Tyler Memorial Hwy.

Charles City, VA 23030

(804) 829-6580

Region 1 – Southeastern Virginia

Lakes, Size & Location	Permit Req.	Boat Ramp	Picnic Facil.	Gas Motor	Boat Rental	Handi. Facil.	Conces. Facil.	LMB BG	CF	CRP	SB	MY	CP	WE	YP	WP
Airfield (105 ac) Located 5 miles south of Wakefield on Rt.628.		DR						•		•			•		•	
Back Bay (25,473 ac) Rt.615.State ramps at Mill Landing Rd. and Back Bay Landing Rd.		•		•	•Priv		•Priv	•	•	•			•		•	•
Burnt Mills (610 ac) Located in Suffolk off Rt. 10 on Rt. 603. No fishing from shore.	Fee	DR		12 HP				•		•			•		•	
Cohoon (510 ac) off Rt.58 on Pitchkettle Road (Rt.604) in Suffolk.	Fee	•		10 HP	•		•	•		•			•		•	
Drummond (3,000 ac) Access by feeder ditch off Rt. 17.					25 HP					•			•		•	
Emporia (210 ac) West of I-95 on Rt.611.		•		10 HP				•	•	•						
Kilby (226 ac) Located on Business Rt.58 in Suffolk. No shore fishing.	Fee	CL		10 HP				•		•			•			
Lone Star (490 ac) Fishing station located off Rt. 10 on Rt. 125 in Suffolk.	Fee	•	•					•		•	•					•
Meade (512 ac) Fishing station (bait sales). Located off Rt.58 on Pitchkettle Rd. (Rt.604) in Suffolk.	Fee	•		10 HP	•		•	•	•	•			•		•	•
Oak Grove Lake (70 ac) Byron Street off Volvo Parkway in Chesapeake. Shore Fishing			•			•		•								
Prince (777 ac) Off Rt.460 on Lake Prince Rt. (Rt.604) in Suffolk.	Fee	•	•	12 HP	•		•	•	•	•	•		•		•	
Smith (222 ac) Fishing station located on Rt.13 (Northampton Blvd) in Va.Beach.	Fee	•	•	12 HP	•		•	•	•	•					•	•
Speights Run (197 ac) Located on Rt.646 off Rt.58 in Suffolk. No shore fishing.	Fee	•		10 HP				•		•			•			
Trashmore (52 ac) Located off Va.Beach Exp.in Va.Beach. No private boats.			•					•	•	•						•
Western Branch (1,579 ac) 2 boat ramps located off Rt.603 and Rt.506 in Suffolk. Concession located on Rt.605.	Fee	•		12 HP	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•
Whitehurst (458 ac) Located off Shore Drive (Rt.60) in Va.Beach.Shore fishing.	Fee	•		12 HP		•		•	•	•			•	•	•	•

Key

Fee - Permit available at location

DR - Dirt ramp

CL - Ramp closed - Another to be built in another location

LMB/BG - Largemouth Bass/Bluegill

CF - Catfish

CRP - Crappie

SB - Striped Bass

MY - Muskellunge

CP - Chain Pickerel

WE - Walleye

YP - Yellow Perch

WP - White Perch

For more information contact:

VDGIF

3909 Airline Boulevard

Chesapeake, VA 23321

(757) 465-6812

Region 2 – Southside Virginia

Lakes, Size & Location	Permit Req.	Boat Ramp	Picnic Facil.	Gas Motor	Boat Rental	Handi. Facil.	Conces. Facil.	LMB BG	CF	CRP	SB	CP	WE	WB
Amelia (100 ac) from Rt.360 take Rt.604 N to Rt.616 to Rt.652.		●				●		●	●	●				
Bannister (400 ac) Rt.501 just north of Halifax.		●		●				●	●	●		●		
Briery Creek (845 ac) Rt.15, 7 miles south of Farmville.		●		10 HP max		●		●		●		●		
Brunswick (150 ac) on Rt.638 off Rt.58 east of Edgerton.		●						●	●	●		●		
Conner (110 ac) from Rt.360 take Rt.746 to Rt.603 to Rt.619 to Rt.623 E to Rt.624 S, 2 miles from Providence.		●						●	●	●		●		
Cumberland State Forest Lakes Arrowhead (6 ac) Rt.60 W, Rt.622 to Rt.629. Bear Creek (42 ac) Rt.60 W to Rt.622 to Rt.629. Bonbrook (6 ac) Rt.60 W to Rt.622-623-626 to C.S.F. Oak Hill (6 ac) Rt.60 W to Rt.622 to Rt.629. Winston (12 ac) Rt.60 W to Rt.622 to Rt.629.		●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●				
Fort Pickett Lakes off Rt.40 east of Blackstone. Birchin (45 ac) limited access. Butterwood Pond (8 ac) Dearing Pond (7 ac) Engineers Pond (19 ac) Lewis Pond (12 ac) Pickett Reservoir (384 ac) Reservation Pond (3 ac) Tommeheton (51 ac) limited access.	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●		Max 35 HP 35 HP 35 HP 35 HP 35 HP 35 HP 35 HP				● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●		● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●		
Gaston (20,300 ac) Mecklenburg and Brunswick counties, various routes.		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Goodwin (13 ac) Twin Lake State Park, from Rt.360 take Rt.621 to park.		●	●		●		●	●	●	●				
Gordon (157 ac) off Rt.58 on Rt.664 south of South Hill.		●		10 HP max				●	●	●		●		
Great Creek (212 ac) 1 mile north of Lawrenceville off Rt. 46.		●	●					●	●	●		●		
Holliday (113 ac) Appomattox-Buckingham State Forest. From Rt. 460 take Rt.24 N to Rt. 626 to Rt. 640 to Rt. 692.		●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●		●		
Horsepen (19 ac) Rt.60 to Rt.638 to WMA.		●	●					●	●	●		●		
James River Ponds Rt.607, 7 miles north of Rt.60 at Bent Creek. Branch (7 ac) Taylor (1 ac) Green Hill (1 ac)			● ● ●			●		● ● ●	● ● ●	● ● ●				
Kerr Reservoir (48,900 ac) Halifax and Mecklenburg counties, various routes.		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●
Modest Creek (29 ac) from Victoria - Rt.49 N to Rt.723 to Rt.739.		●						●	●			●		
Nottoway (188 ac) 6 miles north of Blackstone on Rt. 606.		●		10 HP max				●	●	●		●		
Nottoway Falls (60 ac) from Victoria - Rt.49 N to lake.		●						●	●	●		●		
Prince Edward (27 ac) Twin Lake State Park, from Rt. 360 take Rt.621 to park.		●	●					●	●	●		●		
Sandy River Reservoir (740 ac) Rts.460-640, 1 mile to access road.		●		10 HP max		●		●	●	●		●		
Slate River Watershed (38 ac) in Appomattox -Buckingham State Forest, Rt.640 1 mile north of Rt.636.		●						●	●	●		●		
Wilck's (27 ac) Rt.460 Bus.west in Farmville.		●	●					●	●	●				

Region 2 – Staunton River District

Lakes, Size & Location	Permit Req.	Boat Ramp	Picnic Facil.	Gas Motor	Boat Rental	Handi. Facil.	Conces. Facil.	LMB BG	CF	CRP	MY	WE	SMB	WB	SB
Abbott (24 ac) off Rt.43 at Peaks of Otter on Blue Ridge Parkway.	BANK FISHING ONLY							BG					•		
Burton (76 ac) 6 miles north of Callands via Rt.969 and Rt.800.		•						•	•	•					
Fairy Stone (168 ac) Rt.623 off of Rt.57 west of Bassett.		•	•		•	•	•	•		•					
Leesville Reservoir (3,400 ac) Campbell, Bedford and Pittsylvania counties, various routes.		•	•	•			•	•	•	•		•		•	•
Martinsville Reservoir (175 ac) Rt.220 Bus. South, Rt.174 North, left on Rt.108.	Fee	•	•		•			•	•	•					
Mill Creek (189 ac) Rt.60 to Rt.778, right on 610-619.		•	•					•	•	•					
Nelson (40 ac) Rt.655 E of Arrington, left on 812.		•						•	•	•					
Otter Lake (8 ac) off Blue Ridge Parkway north of Big Island.	BANK FISHING ONLY							•							
Philpott Reservoir (2,800 ac) Franklin, Henry and Patrick counties, various routes.		•	•	•				•	•	•		•	•		
Smith Mountain (20,000 ac) Bedford, Franklin and Pittsylvania counties, various routes.		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•
Stonehouse (34 ac) Rt.610 - 625 - 830.		•	•					•		•					
Thrasher (34 ac) Rt.60 - 610 - 617.		•	•					•		•					
White Oak Mtn.Ponds (4) (1/2 to 7 ac) off Rt.707 out of Spring Garden.								•							

Key

Fee - Boat only, permit available at reservoir
 LMB/BG - Largemouth Bass/Bluegill
 CF - Catfish
 CRP - Crappie
 MY - Muskellunge
 WE - Walleye
 SMB - Smallmouth Bass
 WB - White Bass
 SB - Striped Bass

For more information contact:
 VDGIF
 910 Thomas Jefferson Road
 Forest, VA 24551
 (434) 525-7522

Key

LMB/BG - Largemouth Bass/Bluegill
 CF - Catfish
 CRP - Crappie
 SB - Striped Bass
 CP - Chain Pickerel
 WE - Walleye
 WB - White Bass

For more information contact:
 VDGIF
 910 Thomas Jefferson Road
 Forest, VA 24551
 (434) 525-7522



Region 3 – Southwest Virginia

Lakes, Size & Location	Permit Req.	Boat Ramp	Picnic Facil.	Gas Motor	Boat Rental	Handi. Facil.	Conces. Facil.	LMB BG	SMB	CF	CRP	WB	TR	MY	WE	HSB
Bark Camp (48 ac) Alt.58 to Tacoma, Rt.706 to Rt. 699 to Rt. 822 to U.S.F.S. Rt.993 to lake.	NF	•	•			•		•		•			•			
Beartree (14 ac) I-81 to Marion (Exit 45) and Rt. 16 S to Troutdale, west on Rt.603 to Rt.58 W to lake.	NF		•			•							•			
John Flannagan (1,143 ac) Alt.58 to Rt.63 N to Clincho Rt.63 to Rt.616 to Rt.614 to lake.		•	•	•	•	•		•,KB	•	•	•				•	•
Hales (4 ac) I-81 to Marion (Exit 45) Rt. 16 S to Sugart Grove and Rt.614 to Rt.612 to Rt.798 to lake.	NF												•			
Hidden Valley (61 ac) Abingdon northwest on Alt.58 to Rt.690 to lake.		•						•,RBr	•	•						
Hungry Mother (108 ac) Hungry Mother State Park. I-81 to Marion (Exit 47) to Rt. 16 N to state to park and lake.		•	•		•	•		•,KB,RBr	•	•				•	•	
Keokee (92 ac) Rt.23 to Rt.68W at Appalachia to Rt. 606 to Rt.623 to U.S.F.S. road to lake.	NF	•				•		•		•						
Laurel (Breaks Interstate Park) Rt.460 at Vansant to Rt.83 W to Rt.80 N to park.								•								
Laurel Bed (300 ac) I-81 to Chilhowie, Rt.107 NW to Saltville.Signs lead to Clinch Mtn.WMA and lake.		•							•				•			
Lincolnshire (20 ac) Rt.460 at Tazewell.		•	•					•		•			•			
North Fork Pound (154 ac) Rt.23 to Pound and lake.		•	•	•	•			•,KB	•	•	•			•		
South Holston (7,580 ac) I-81 to Abingdon (Exit 17) Rt.75 S to Rt.670 and lake.		•	•	•	•			•,RBr	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	
Witten (52 ac) Rt.460 to Tazewell and Rt.16 N to Rt. 643 to lake.		•	•					•,RBr	•				•			

Region 3 – New River Valley

Lakes, Size & Location	Permit Req.	Boat Ramp	Picnic Facil.	Gas Motor	Boat Rental	Handi. Facil.	Conces. Facil.	LMB BG	CF	CRP	MY	SMB	WB	SB	HSB
Claytor (4,472 ac) Various routes.		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Gatewood (162 ac) Rt.710 (Mt.Olivet Rd.), west of Pulaski off Rt.99 N.		•	•		•		•	•	•	•		•			
Rural Retreat (90 ac) I-81 to Rural Retreat (Exit 60) to Rt. 90 S. Signs to lake.		•	•		•		•	•	•	•	•				
Lovill's Creek (45 ac) Rt.52 to Cana, Rt.686 to lake.		•	•				•	•	•	•					

Key

NF - National Forest

LMB/BG - Largemouth Bass/Bluegill

KB - Kentucky

RBr - Redbreast Sunfish

SMB - Smallmouth Bass

CF - Catfish

CRP - Crappie

WB - White Bass

TR - Trout

MY - Muskellunge

WE - Walleye

SB - Striped Bass

HSB - Hybrid Striped Bass

For more information contact:

VDGIF

1796 Highway Sixteen

Marion, VA 24354

(276) 783-4860

Region 4 – West Central Virginia

Lakes, Size & Location	Permit Req.	Boat Ramp	Picnic Facil.	Gas Motor	Boat Rental	Handi. Facil.	Conces. Facil.	LMB BG	CF	CRP	TR	CP	WE
Clifton Forge Reservoir (9 ac) I-64 W of Clifton Forge, Exit 24, go toward town, Rt. 606 N to top of mountain.	NF							•	•		•		
Coles Run Reservoir (7 ac) Exit 96 off I-64 at Waynesboro, Rt. 624 S, Rt. 664 S to Forest Rd 42, take right, go 4.5 miles.	NF										•		
Douthat (52 ac) I-64 W of Lexington (Exit 27).	Fee	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	
Forest Service Lakes													
Braley Pond (5 ac) 10 miles west of Churchville on Rt. 250, 0.5 north on Rt. 715.	NF		•					•	•		•		
Elkhorn (50 ac) 10 miles west of Churchville on Rt. 250, 6.5 miles north on Rt. 715, east on Forest Road 95.	NF	•	•			•		•	•		•		
Hearthstone (14 ac) 5 miles north of Churchville on Rt. 42, 0.4 mi. north on Rt. 760, 3 miles west on Rt. 730, 2 miles north Forest Service Road 101.	NF	•						•	•	•	•		
Sherando (20 & 8 ac) Exit 96 off I-64 at Waynesboro Rt. 624 S (3 mi.) and Rt. 664 S (7 mi).	NF	•	•,SW		Canoe	•	•	•	•		•		
Lexington (22 ac) Rt. 11 south to 251 - 612 - 667.	•										•		
Mills Creek Reservoir (17 ac) Exit 96 off I-64 at Waynesboro, Rt. 624 S, Rt. 664 S to Forest Rd. 42, take right, go 1.5 miles.	NF										•		
Moomaw (2,530 ac) Callaghan Exit off I-64, 2 miles east on Rt. 661, 10 miles north on Rt. 620.	PK	•	•	•	•	•	•	• SMB	•	•	•	•	
Tams City Park (3 ac) City of Staunton.								•	•		•		
Virginia Power Rec. Ponds (40 & 32 ac) Rt. 39 west of Warm Springs to Hiners Store, Rt. 600 N (6 mi).		•	•			•		•	•	•			
Willis Robertson (26 ac) Rt. 11 bypass to S. Lexington, Rt. 251 follow signs to lake.		•	•		•	•	•	•	•				•

Key

Fee - Permit available at location

NF - National Forest

SW - Swimming

PK - Parking

LMB/BG - Largemouth

Bass/Bluegill

CF - Catfish

CRP - Crappie

TR - Trout

CP - Chain Pickerel

WE - Walleye

SMB - Smallmouth Bass

For more information contact:

VDGIF

P.O. Box 996

Verona, VA 24482

(540) 248-9360

Region 4 – Northwest Virginia

Lakes, Size & Location	Permit Req.	Boat Ramp	Picnic Facil.	Handi. Facil.	Conces. Facil.	LMB BG	CF	CRP	TR	MY	NP	WE
Arrowhead (34 ac) southeast of Luray on Rt.669.	•	•	•			•	•	•			•	•
Clearbrook (3 ac) Clearbrook Park (Town of Clearbrook Rt.81 - 11 - 672).			•		•				•			
Forest Service Lakes												
Bealler's Ferry Pond (7 ac) Hwy.211 to Luray. North on Rt.675,east on Rt.684.	NF			•		•	•					
Briery (9 ac) Rt.257 W of Dayton - Rt.924.	NF					•	•		•			
Dry Run (10 ac) Rt.33 W of Rawley Springs.	NF							•				
Hone Quarry (6 ac) Rt.257 W of Dayton - Rt.924.	NF					•	•	•	•			
Skidmore (118 ac) Rt.33 W of Harrisonburg - PS 227.	NF					•	•	•	•			
Slate Lick (10 ac) Rt.33 - Rt.612N - Rt.230 - PS 1279.	NF					•	•		•			
Tomahawk (2 ac) Rt.263 and 610 W of Mt.Jackson.	NF			•		•	•		•			
Laura (44 ac) Bryce Mtn.Resort at Bayse. Rt.263, 12 miles west of Mt.Jackson.		•				•	•	•			•	•
Silver (10 ac) From Harrisonburg take Rt.42 south to Dayton, then right on Rt.701.									•			
Virginia Dept. of Game & Inland Fisheries Lakes												
Frederick (117 ac) Rt.522 and 340, 5 miles north of Front Royal.		•		•	•	•	•	•			•	•
Shenandoah (36 ac) Rt.276 S of Rt.33.		•				•	•	•		•		
Wilkins (3 ac) Jim Barnett Park (Winchester).			•	•		•	•	•	•			

Key

NF - National Forest Stamp

LMB/BG - Largemouth

Bass/Bluegill

CF - Catfish

CRP - Crappie

TR - Trout

MY - Muskellunge

NP - Northern Pike

WE - Walleye

For more information contact:

VDGIF

P.O. Box 996

Verona, VA 24482

(540) 248-9360

Region 5 – Northern Virginia

Lakes, Size & Location	Permit Req.	Boat Ramp	Picnic Facil.	Gas Motor	Boat Rental	Handi. Facil.	Conces. Facil.	LMB BG	SMB	CF	CRP	SB	TR	NP MY	WE
Abel (185 ac) Rt. 17 N - Rt. 616 N - Rt. 651 E.		●						●		●	●				
Accotink (90 ac) FCPA, I-95 N - 644 W - right on Backlick, left on Highland, right on Accotink.			●		●	●	●	●		●					
Anna (9,600 ac) Rt. 1 south, west on Rt. 208 to lake.		●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●			
Beaverdam Cr. (350 ac) 15 N - 50 W - 659 N.		PR						●	●	●	●				
Brittle (77 ac) 29 N - 600 E - 793 S.		●	●		●	FP	●	●		●	●				●
Burke (218 ac) in Burke Park. 95 N - 123 N.		●	●		●	FP	●	●		●	●			MY	●
Cook (4 ac) Cameron Run Reg. Pk. (Alexandria).						FP		●		●			●		
Curtis (91 ac) 17 N - 616 N - 662 W, surrounded by park.		●	●		●	FP		●		●	●				
Fairfax Lake (28 ac) 7 W - 606 W - FCPA surrounded by park.			●		●			●		●	●				
Germantown Lake (109 ac) Rt. 17 to 28 N, 643 (Meetze Road) to C.M. Crockett Park.	●	●	●		●	FP	●	●		●	●				
Hunting Run Reservoir (430 ac) 3 W to 610 W.	●	●			●	FP		●		●	●				
Huntsman (27 ac) 123 N - 636 N - 641 N.								●		●	●				
Lake Anna State Park Pond (1 ac) Rt. 1 to Fredericksburg west on 208, north on 601 to Lake Anna State Park. (Kids only)			●			●	●	●		●					
Locust Shade (8 ac) Locust Shade Park. Paddle boats available.			●			●	●	●		●	●		●		
Lunga Reservoir (670 ac) I-95 (Exit 148) to USMC Truck Road and follow signs to lake.	●	●		9.9 HP MAX			●	●		●	●				
Motts (160 ac) 95 N - 3 W - 639 N - 618 W.	●	●	●		●	FP	●	●		●	●			NP	
Mtn. Run (75 ac) 29 S - 718 W - 719 N.	●	●	●					●		●	●				
Ni Reservoir (411 ac) 95 N - 3 W - 620 S - 627 S	●	●	●		●			●		●	●				
Ocoquan (2,100 ac) two parks off 123 N. Fountainhead Park Prince William Park		●	●	9.9 HP MAX	●	●	●	●		●	●				
Orange (124 ac) Game Department, off Rt. 629 two miles east of Orange on Rt. 20 S - 629 S.		●	●		●	FP	●	●		●	●				●
Pelham (255 ac) 29 S - 718 N.	●	●						●		●	●				
Phelps Pond (3 ac) Rt. 17 N - Rt. 651. Phelps WMA.								●		●					
Royal (35 ac) 123 N - R. Zion Rd. - Rt. 20 S - 629 S - R. Commonwealth Blvd. - R. Gainsborough Dr.			●					●		●	●				

Key

PR - Primitive Ramp	CRP - Crappie
FP - Fishing Pier	SB - Striped Bass
LMB/BG - Largemouth Bass/Bluegill	TR - Trout
SMB - Smallmouth Bass	MY - Muskellunge
CF - Catfish	NP - Northern Pike
	WE - Walleye

For more information contact:
VDGIF
1320 Belman Road
Fredericksburg, VA 22401
(540) 899-4169

Region 5 – Central Virginia

Lakes, Size & Location	Permit Req.	Boat Ramp	Picnic Facil.	Gas Motor	Boat Rental	Handi. Facil.	Conces. Facil.	LMB BG	CF	TR	CRP	SB	CP	WE
Albemarle Parks Dept. Lakes Beaver Creek (104 ac) Follow 680 from Rt. 250 junction west of Charlottesville to lake. Chris Greene (62 ac) Off Rt. 606 one mile from airport. Mint Springs (8 ac) Rt. 684-788 west of Crozet. Totier Creek (66 ac) Rt. 726 to Rt. 845W of Scottsville. Walnut Creek (60 ac) on Rt. 631 south of Charlottesville.	Fee Fee Fee	• • •	• •,SW •,SW • •,SW		Canoe Canoe	• •		• • • • •	• • • • •	 • • •	• • • • •		• •	
Bryan Park Lakes (12 ac) Richmond, Hermitage Rd/ Lakeside Ave. to Bryan Park.			•			•		•	•					
Chesdin (3,100 ac) I-95 to I-85 S to Rt. 460 W to Rt. 623 N to Rt. 601 W to Rt. 776 N.		•	•	•	•		•	•	•		•	•	•	•
Gordonsville (81 ac) I-64 W to Rt. 15 Boswell Tavern to Rt. 603.	•	•						•	•		•		•	
Henrico County Park Lakes Crump Park (2 ac) Staples Mill Rd. (33 W) to Courtney Road. Deep Run Park (2) (2 ac) I-64 to S. Gaskins Rd. to Ridgefield Parkway. Dorey Park (5 ac) Off Darbytown Rd. Three Lakes Park (3) (4 ac) off Rt. 301 N to Wilkinson Rd.			• • • •			• • • •		• • • •	• • • •	 • •				
Lakeview (42 ac) Rt. 1 to Pickett St.		•	•					•	•		•			
Northeast Creek (187 ac) 4 miles east of Louisa on Rt. 33.	•	•						•	•		•		•	
Ragged Mountain (50 ac) Rt. 702 off Rt. 29.	•							•	•		•			
Rivanna (450 ac) Rt. 659 off 631 (Rio Rd).		•						•	•		•			
Sugar Hollow Reservoir (47 ac) On Moorman's River 6 mi. west of White Hall on Rt. 614. No boats allowed.										•				
Shields (7 ac) in Byrd Park in Richmond.			•			•		•	•	•				
Swan (13 ac) in Byrd Park in Richmond.			•			•		•	•					
Swift Creek (156 ac) Pocahontas State Park, Rt. 10 to Rt. 655 (Beach Rd) to Rt. 780.		•	•		•	•	•	•	•		•		•	
Virginia Dept. of Game & Inland Fisheries Lakes Albemarle (35 ac) In White Hall, take Rt. 614 E to Rt. 675, follow to lake. Fluvanna Ruritan (50 ac) On Rt. 619 off Rt. 58 at Cunningham. Powhatan Ponds (3) (20 ac) Powhatan County Rt. 60 W to Rt. 627 to Rt. 662. Powhatan Lakes (2) (71 ac) Powhatan County Rt. 60 W to Rt. 684 (Bell Rd) to Rt. 625 (Powhatan Lakes Rd.)		• • PR •						• • • •	• • • •	 • •	• • • •		• •	

Key

SW - Swimming
 Fee - Fee available at lakes
 LMB/BG - Largemouth Bass/Bluegill
 CF - Catfish
 TR - Trout
 CRP - Crappie
 SB - Striped Bass
 CP - Chain Pickerel
 WE - Walleye
 PR - Primitive Ramp

For more information contact:
 VDGI 4010 West Broad Street
 Richmond, VA 23230
 (804) 367-6765

Major Fishing Rivers

Appomattox River

The Appomattox River, a major tributary to the James River, flows out of Appomattox County toward Petersburg and Hopewell, and along its course forms the boundaries between such counties as Buckingham, Prince Edward, Cumberland, Amelia, Powhatan, Chesterfield, Dinwiddie and Prince George. Lake Chesdin, just west of Petersburg, is a major man-made impoundment on the river.

In addition to largemouth and smallmouth bass, the Appomattox is home to the Kentucky spotted bass. These fish were introduced into the Appomattox in the mid-1970s and they have moved throughout the river and into its major tributaries, such as Briery Creek, Bush River, and Buffalo Creek. Anglers are most likely to catch spotted bass from just upstream of Farmville down to the Amelia/Chesterfield County line at Route 360 west of Richmond.

The river also contains a wide range of species, including redbreast sunfish, bluegill, flier, crappie, pickerel and hard-fighting minnows, like fallfish and chubs. Striped bass and walleye, which run out of Lake Chesdin, provide a seasonal fishery in the Appomattox. Access is mostly limited to bridge crossings. Numerous fallen trees cross the stream so anglers who don't mind pulling a canoe or johnboat across these trees can enjoy a quiet day on this River. Due to the remote nature of the River, only experienced boaters should try its waters.

Blackwater River (Chowan Drainage)

The Blackwater originates in Prince George County, flows east through Surry County and then south into the Nottoway to form the Chowan. It hosts runs of river herring in spring, along with limited numbers of shad and striped bass. Angling for redbreast sunfish ("redthroats" or "robins") is also quite good in the spring. The river also has largemouth bass, bluegill, crappie, flier and chain pickerel. Bowfin and gar are common in the lower main stem. The water is dark, tannin stained and slightly acidic. A scenic river, it flows through picturesque swamps and is considered excellent for canoeing. Most of

this river is not conducive to wading. Ramps are available in the City of Franklin, and at Routes 611 and 603 off Route 258. Canoe access is available at several bridge crossings, but beware of vehicle parking restrictions. Bank fishing opportunities are limited to some bridge crossings, state boat ramps, and canoe access areas. No permits are required.

Chickahominy River

This river, with its beautiful cypress studded shoreline, has supported a nationally known largemouth bass fishery for many years. The river and reservoir typically rank in the top five water bodies in the state for the number of trophy fish, based on the Angler Recognition Program. Chain pickerel, bowfin, yellow perch, channel catfish, longnose gar, blue catfish and largemouth bass generally comprise most of these award-winning fish. Yellow perch, white perch, and crappie all provide excellent fishing. Although the "Chick" doesn't yield as many large blue catfish as the James, catfish are abundant. Common carp and longnose gar are large and plentiful. Several anglers who enjoy a good fight have learned to capitalize on these under-utilized species. The spring river herring runs at Walker's Dam continue to draw a number of anglers to the tidal Chickahominy.

The tidal Chickahominy River can be accessed at the following public landings: Chickahominy Riverfront Park (formerly Powhatan Resort) 757-258-5020; the Chickahominy Wildlife Management Area landing on Morris Creek; and Brickyard Landing west of Toano, off Route 610. Private ramps which provide access to the river for a small fee include: Rock-a-Hock Campground 804-966-2759; Riverside Camp 804-966-5536; Colonial Harbor 804-966-5523; and River's Rest 804-829-2753. Walker's Dam, accessed through Rock-a-Hock Campground, is located off U.S. Route 60 on Route 649, west of Lanexa.

Clinch River

The Clinch River is the crown of the mountain empire. Flowing southwestward from its origin near the town of Tazewell, the Clinch travels some 135 miles, reaching portions of Tazewell, Russell, Wise and Scott counties on its way to the Tennessee state line. In a cast of Virginia rivers that portray history and natural wealth, the Clinch has a story and a character all its own.

The Clinch supports a unique assemblage of aquatic life. The river is home to many rare species of mussels and dozens of species of minnows and darters, many of which sport brilliant colors and play a vital role in the aquatic ecosystem. But, the variety of sport fish is what makes the Clinch a great destination for anglers.

Many game fish species, which have been stocked into other Virginia rivers, are native to the Clinch. Among the native game fish in the river are the smallmouth bass, spotted bass, walleye and sauger. Largemouth bass, rock bass, redbreast sunfish, longear sunfish and bluegill are available, as well as musky, black crappie and freshwater drum. Anglers who are looking for catfish will find both channel and flathead catfish in good numbers and sizes. Striped bass and white bass are sometimes caught in the lower stretches of the river, where they migrate out of Norris Reservoir in Tennessee. Boaters will also notice longnose gar "sunning" near the river's surface and occasionally taking a gulp of air. Healthy populations of redbreast suckers and carp are available for anglers with the prowess and inclination to pursue them.

Dan River

The Dan River originates high along the eastern slopes of the Blue Ridge Mountains in Patrick County and flows easterly until it empties into 50,000-acre John H. Kerr Reservoir (Buggs Island Lake) near Clarksville, Virginia. The Dan River is a stream for all seasons and the choice of a variety of anglers.

Beginning in the mountainous Patrick County, the Dan River offers a variety of wild trout as well as stocked trout fishing opportunities, with two special regulation areas (check out our annual trout guide). The trout fishing eventually fades as the river passes under Route 103 and flows into North Carolina. The river flows back into Virginia a few miles west of Danville, Virginia as a slow flowing Southside Virginia stream. Fishing is generally limited to catfish, largemouth bass and several kinds of sunfish. The landlocked striped bass fishing the Dan is noted for begins east of the City of Danville. The river flows back into North Carolina for approximately five miles before re-entering Virginia. Thanks to a reciprocal agreement, anglers can fish in North Carolina and Virginia from the Brantley Steam Plant Dam downstream to and

throughout John H. Kerr Reservoir. Migratory fish running out of Kerr Reservoir and flathead and blue catfish are the heart of the lower Dan River fishing. Walleye begin moving as early as January, and the white perch and white bass begin to migrate when the dogwoods bloom in early April. The most popular is the striped bass run that begins in late April and continues through May. There is also some winter fishing for walleyes.

James River (Upper)

From the confluence of the Jackson and Cowpasture rivers in Alleghany County downstream to Richmond, the James River offers a wide range of angling opportunities and settings. Smallmouth bass are the dominant game species, but spotted and largemouth bass can also be caught. Smallmouth bass fishing is good throughout the upper river. Both the mountain sections (upstream from Lynchburg) and the piedmont sections (between Lynchburg and Richmond) generally provide good fishing. There is not a lot of difference in the fish populations from one area to another, it is simply a matter of finding the particular locations where the fish are holding and using whatever bait or lure they might want that day.

Other species are also plentiful in the James River, including channel catfish, flathead catfish and various sunfish species (redbreast, bluegill and rock bass). Flathead catfish appear to be more numerous upstream from Lynchburg, and channel catfish are more numerous below Lynchburg. Muskies are also annually stocked in the James. These fish are scarce, but some very large fish can be caught. Most of the muskies are found upstream from Lynchburg.

Overall, the James River offers an excellent fishing opportunity for a wide variety of species. Canoeing is the best way to access

the River, and a map showing access points is available from the Department. Small boats (such as john boats) can also be used at some access points. Bank and wade fishing access is also available throughout the River. A 14-mile section from near Eagle Rock to the Route 630 crossing at Springfield has been designated as a State Scenic River.

In the spring of 2007 and 2008, the James experienced a fish kill event, similar to ones seen on the Shenandoah River over the past several years. The cause is still undetermined, but is under investigation by multiple state agencies. Based upon preliminary observations and data collection, population-level impacts from the kill appear to be minimal. The total numbers of smallmouth bass, sunfish, rock bass, etc. are similar now to numbers prior to the 2007 kill. We have seen what appears to be a reduced number of large smallmouth bass, compared with pre-kill numbers. We are not sure if this is kill-related, but suspect that it is. In short, the total number of fish in the upper James is not noticeably lower following this fish kill. The Department will continue to work on determining the cause(s) of these fish kills and finding solutions

James River (Lower)

The tidal James River and its tributaries support a nationally recognized largemouth bass fishery. Upstream from Hopewell, fishing for largemouth is best in old river channels and abandoned gravel pits connected to the main stem. Downstream from Hopewell, largemouth fishing is most productive in larger tributary creeks, the main stem James River having very limited shoreline structure below Hopewell. The creeks between Hopewell and Hog Island provide excellent largemouth habitat, with abundant shoreline structure, such as old pier pilings and downed trees, adjacent to channel drop-

offs as well as large expanses of vegetated tidal flats.

The tidal James River provides the best fishing for blue catfish in the state, and recently anglers from around the country have begun to travel to Virginia to fish for the abundant large blue catfish found in the tidal James and its tributaries. Hundreds of 30- to 60-pound fish are caught each year in the tidal James system. Excellent black crappie fishing is available for anglers who take the time to locate them; best fishing for crappie occurs in tributary creeks and in oxbows upstream of Hopewell. White perch are caught in good numbers throughout the river. Sunfish are generally small in this tidal river, but pockets of hand-sized bluegill may be located in the backwater areas off the main stem and in tidal creeks. Common carp are abundant from Hog Island upstream to Richmond. In the James, carp typically reach 10 pounds, and anglers occasionally take carp up to 30 pounds. Walleye are an extremely rare catch in the James between I-95 in Richmond and Hopewell, as well as in the tidal Appomattox River.

A restoration program for American shad was initiated in 1992, and stocked fish have already returned to the James as spawning adults. These returning adult American shad, along with a healthy run of hickory, have created a very popular fishery within the James River fall line each spring from late March through early May. These are positive signs, but it will take many years to rebuild a viable population of American shad in the James River system.

Anadromous striped bass ("rockfish") fishing has been excellent since the early 1990s. During the spring season stripers are caught throughout the tidal James, and striper action can be extremely exciting in the vicinity of the I-95 Bridge in Richmond.

(For season information on anadromous striped bass, contact the Virginia Marine Resources Commission (VMRC) in Newport News at 1-800-541-4646 or www.mrc.virginia.gov.)

Maury River

The Calfpasture and Little Calfpasture rivers come together to form the Maury River just before the Maury enters the famous Goshen Pass and begins a turbulent run downstream, dropping as much as 20 feet in one 100 yard stretch of the river. Once through the Pass the river drops into the valley, continuing toward Lexington at a fast



Catfishing workshop on James River, ©DGIF

pace. It maintains that rate of flow, except where man intervened, until it enters the James River at Glasgow. The Maury River is fairly short by most standards, flowing only 30 miles to its confluence with the James River. Unlike most Virginia rivers the Maury does not cross any county lines and is contained entirely within Rockbridge County. While nature designed the Maury as a fast flowing stream, several dams have changed its personality: an 8-foot one in Lexington and a 20-foot one near Buena Vista.

The Goshen Pass section of the river is an excellent stocked trout fishing water. While the trout fishing is popular, the bass and sunfish in the river hold more appeal for many anglers. You might catch a smallmouth bass anywhere from the headwaters where the Calfpasture and Little Calfpasture join to form the Maury, to the mouth of the river where it enters the James. Anglers frequently catch smallmouth bass while fishing the Goshen Pass waters for trout, but the best fishing begins downstream where the Pass waters become more gentle. As is true of most fast smallmouth bass streams, the Maury River is loaded with scrappy and tasty redbreast sunfish. Many anglers release their bass and string a good catch of sunfish for the table. In addition to the bass and sunnies the Maury holds populations of rock bass, another stream mate of smallmouth bass in the western part of the state. Other angling possibilities include the likes of carp, catfish and suckers.

New River

When you plan a trip on the New River in Southwest Virginia, you will be floating into the past. The New River is an ancient river system, the oldest on the North American continent and second only to the Nile River in Africa as the oldest river in the world. It begins as two streams in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina, before merging into the New River four miles from the Virginia line. And therein lies another quirk of this ancient river—it flows northward rather than southward like most of the other major rivers along the eastern seaboard. It meanders some 160 miles through the counties of Grayson, Carroll, Pulaski, Montgomery, Wythe and Giles in Virginia before it turns into Bluestone Lake in West Virginia. Below Bluestone it continues northwest and joins the Gauley River to form the Kanawha River at the Gauley Bridge.

Throughout its journey in Virginia, the

New River flows through spectacular, untamed mountain scenery complete with craggy rock cliffs and magnificent gorges. Thus, the New River provides plenty of excitement for whitewater enthusiasts, with several major Class II – III rapids. There is also an abundance of flatwater to please motorboaters and canoeists. The Department has numerous boat ramps along the river, including recently completed facilities at Byllesby Reservoir, Austinville and Pembroke. A free float guide authored by Department of Game and Inland Fisheries biologists is available from some of our offices statewide.

Fishing is not to be missed in the New River. Simply stated, the New rivals the James and Rappahannock rivers as one of the best fishing rivers in Virginia. It supports outstanding populations of just about every major freshwater game fish in the state: smallmouth bass, spotted bass, largemouth bass, rock bass, striped bass, white bass, hybrid striped bass, muskellunge, walleye, black crappie, channel catfish, flathead catfish, yellow perch, redbreast sunfish and bluegill. State records that have been caught in the New River include muskellunge (45 lbs.), smallmouth bass (8 lbs., 1 oz.), and walleye (15 lbs., 15oz.). The state record spotted bass came out of Claytor Lake in 1993 at 3 lbs., 10 oz. Best of all, the river has the potential to yield many more record-setting catches in the future.

North Fork Holston River

From its origin in the southeast corner of Bland County, the North Fork of the Holston River flows more than 100 miles through Southwest Virginia before crossing the Tennessee state line near the community of Yuma. The river boasts an outstanding smallmouth bass population, and supports populations of many other fish species as well. Fish population abundance and size structure have been stable in recent years.

The North Fork Holston River offers good numbers of smallmouth bass between 14 and 18 inches long. About one third of the smallmouth sampled each year measure more than 14 inches total length, and more than 10 percent are longer than 17 inches. Rock bass and several species of sunfish also provide good fishing opportunities. Channel and flathead catfish are available, but not in big numbers. There is a fish consumption prohibition in effect from Saltville downstream to the Tennessee state line due to mercury contamination.

North Fork Shenandoah River

The North Fork Shenandoah River flows north 116 miles from northern Rockingham County to the Town of Front Royal where it joins the South Fork Shenandoah to form the Shenandoah River. The North Fork is a relatively small, shallow river; is an ideal river to float by canoe; and can easily be waded.

Unfortunately, widespread “chronic” fish kills, involving mostly smallmouth bass and sunfish, have plagued the river each spring since 2004. The severity and distribution of these springtime fish kills has varied from year to year, and certain sections of the North Fork may harbor more favorable numbers of sportfish than others. Other species have been mildly affected by these fish kills. Biologists have documented above average smallmouth bass spawning success the past four years and this alone has minimized the observed impacts of these fish kills. Fish from these spawning classes will average 9-14 inches, and these fish are what anglers can expect to see in 2009. The fish kills in the North Fork were minimal in 2008 and biologists plus anglers reported increased numbers of smallmouth bass and sunfish in 2008. Because smallmouth bass grow extremely slow and live to old age in the North Fork, it may take several years before the fishery fully recovers. This will also depend upon the occurrence of more kills in the future. Identical fish kills have also plagued the South Fork Shenandoah River since 2005. To date, the cause of these fish kills remains unknown. Scientists and concerned citizens are still actively investigating the cause of these fish kills in the Shenandoah River Watershed.

Anglers can expect to catch fair numbers of smallmouth bass and redbreast sunfish in 2009, unless kill episodes return. Largemouth bass are limited to few areas of the North Fork where deep pools with slower currents exist. The North Fork is home to several sunfish species: redbreast sunfish, rock bass, bluegill, and pumpkinseed sunfish. The fallfish feels right at home in the mid-depth currents of the North Fork. This “overlooked” sportfish is very abundant and can reach lengths of up to 18 inches. The Department annually stocks fingerling-size musky at several sites on the North Fork downstream of Mount Jackson. American eel, white sucker, common carp, crappie, yellow bullhead and channel catfish are

some other fish species that anglers might encounter in the North Fork.

North Landing and Northwest Rivers

With the Chesapeake Bay and the Atlantic Ocean so close by and so prominent on maps of the Tidewater area of Virginia, it's understandable that many people might overlook the North Landing and Northwest Rivers when planning a fishing or boating excursion.

The North Landing and Northwest Rivers may be close in proximity and eventually join in North Carolina, but there are plenty of differences between the two. North Landing, (the larger of the two), contains part of the Intracoastal Waterway, so there's a deep channel for large boats. You can follow the waterway north to the Elizabeth River, and ultimately, the Chesapeake Bay. Heading south takes you into Currituck Sound in North Carolina. The river has extensive marshes around it with several small tributary streams, particularly along the western shore.

The Northwest River, draining eastward from the Great Dismal Swamp, is very dark in color and acidic (commonly referred to as blackwater). Instead of marshes, the shoreline is lined with cypress trees and deep, dark swamps. As with the North Landing River, there are plenty of small tributaries to explore that keep you out of the way of the bigger boats on the main river. **Boaters should be mindful of the wakes of larger boats. They can be dangerous.**

Anglers will find a wide variety of fish in these waters, both freshwater and brackish. Common fish in the North Landing River

include largemouth bass, bluegill, pumpkinseed, yellow perch, white perch and white catfish. White catfish and white perch are more abundant in the main river, whereas the sunfish are more common in the tributaries. On the western shore, the Pocaty River is a good tributary stream for largemouth bass, bluegill and pumpkinseed. On the east side, West Neck Creek is also a good spot for these species. Both of these streams produce some big bass. Anglers on the North Landing River are also enjoying the resurgence of the striped bass population along the Atlantic Coast. While trophy stripers are rare, smaller stripers (up to 10 pounds) have become fairly common in recent years at certain locations and time of the year.

The Northwest River has fewer brackish water species than the North Landing River. White perch and white catfish are not as common. Bluegill and pumpkinseed sunfish are abundant. Redear sunfish (shellcrackers) are found here in fairly good numbers. The Northwest River also has some black crappie and chain pickerel, which prefer the darker, acidic water more prevalent here. The river is popular with bass anglers, but may be best known for its nice size bluegill.

Nottoway River

The Nottoway River is located in south central and southeastern Virginia. The river's length is approximately 130 miles. It begins in Prince Edward and Lunenburg counties and flows southeasterly, forming a boundary for Nottoway-Lunenburg, Brunswick-Dinwiddie, and Greenville-Sussex counties, then meanders across Sussex and Southampton counties to its confluence with the Blackwater River at the North Carolina line, forming the Chowan River.

Above the Route 630 bridge on the Greenville-Sussex County line, the river is generally shallow, clear and fast flowing. There are numerous small rapids that prevent the use of outboard motors and large boats, but canoeists will find some nice float trips. Below Route 630, the river slows, deepens, and darkens as numerous swamps in the Coastal Plain join it. This part of the river, particularly in Southampton County, is large enough for bass boats during normal flows.

For anglers, the river's fishery could also be divided at the Route 630 bridge. The upper river has numerous redbreast sunfish, smallmouth bass and Roanoke bass. Below the bridge, bluegill, largemouth bass, black

crappie and channel catfish are more common. In the spring, anglers can catch blueback herring, American shad, hickory shad, striped bass and white perch migrating upstream from North Carolina.

Rappahannock and Rapidan Rivers

Above Fredericksburg and the tidal influence, the Rappahannock and Rapidan rivers provide excellent smallmouth bass and redbreast sunfish angling. Herring and shad run the river each spring in the tidal waters below Fredericksburg. Below the fall line, the Rappahannock also hosts white perch, largemouth bass, striped bass, crappies, yellow perch, channel catfish and blue catfish.

The Rappahannock River flows from its origin at Chester Gap in Fauquier County approximately 184 miles to the Chesapeake Bay. The first 62 miles, from the headwaters to Mayfield Bridge (Fredericksburg), are designated State Scenic River. Access to the Rappahannock system (defined here as the Rapidan and Rappahannock Rivers) is fairly limited and primitive. Established access points on the Rappahannock (traveling downstream) are at Kelly's Ford (Route 672 off Route 651) in Culpeper County and Motts Landing (Route 618) in Spotsylvania County. About 25 miles separates these canoe/john boat slides, and an overnight camp stop is nearly mandatory for those that float fish this reach. Another access point is located on the Rapidan River at Elys Ford (Route 610) in Spotsylvania County about 14 miles upstream of Motts Landing. Access may also be gained via several "non established" points—these consisting of VDOT right-of-ways along bridges. The river is tidal below Fredericksburg, and public boat launch sites are limited to four (two near Fredericksburg, Hicks Landing (Port Royal) and Tappahannock).

The Rappahannock River's character changes abruptly in Fredericksburg at the fall line (the limit of tidal influence). Above the fall line, the river is usually clear, swift, and dominant substrates are bedrock, boulder and cobble-perfect habitat for smallmouth bass and related species. However, below Route 1 the river is tidal, and the substrate is finer-dominated by sand, and the water is frequently murky. Species composition shifts with habitat, and largemouth bass, catfish and anadromous species are common in and below Fredericksburg.



2008 Kids 'n Fishing Contest; ©DGIF

Shenandoah River (Main Stem)

The main stem Shenandoah River is formed when the North Fork and South Fork converge at Front Royal, Virginia. The Shenandoah flows for 57 miles until it empties into the Potomac River at Harpers Ferry, West Virginia.

Serious smallmouth anglers know the Shenandoah River is one of the top smallmouth bass rivers in the eastern United States. Unfortunately, a devastating fish kill took a large percentage of the adult smallmouth bass, redbreast sunfish and northern hogsuckers in the spring of 2005. Isolated incidences of dead and morbid fish have also occurred in the river since 2005. The impact of these kills has been worse upstream in the North Fork and South Fork. Other species in the main stem Shenandoah appear to be mildly affected by these fish kills. To date, officials have not been able to determine the exact cause of these fish kills. Excellent spawning success of smallmouth bass the past four years and increased growth rates of juvenile fish has greatly minimized the observed impacts of these fish kills. In 2008 anglers and biologists observed above-average catch rates of smallmouth bass and reported larger fish than in previous years. Identical fish kills have plagued the North Fork Shenandoah River since 2004 and South Fork Shenandoah since 2005. Scientists and concerned citizens are still actively investigating the cause of these fish kills in the Shenandoah River Watershed. Anglers should expect good numbers of 9-16 inch smallmouth bass to be available in 2009. Largemouth bass do not gain as much attention as their cousin the smallmouth, but the Shenandoah harbors a quality largemouth fishery. In some sections of the river largemouth bass may outnumber smallmouth. Anglers should seek-out the slower, deeper pool habitat when searching for largemouth bass. The Department annually stocks fingerling musky at several locations in the main stem Shenandoah and this fishery appears to be outstanding. Channel catfish are plentiful throughout the entire Shenandoah River, with a healthy population dominated by quality-size (2-4 lb) cats. Some cats up to 10 lbs are also available to anglers. American eel, white sucker, margined madtom, northern hogsucker, common carp, yellow bullhead, and redhorse suckers are additional fish species found in the main stem Shenandoah River that anglers may encounter.

South Fork Shenandoah River

The South Fork Shenandoah River begins at the confluence of the North River and South River near Port Republic and flows north 97 miles to meet the North Fork Shenandoah at the Town of Front Royal. The South Fork is a very popular destination for canoeists. The close proximity of the river to urban areas of Virginia and the aesthetic beauty of the valley attract thousands of river users each year. Twenty public access points along the entire length of the river creates the opportunity to plan many different float trips of varying length.

The South Fork Shenandoah River has a long-standing reputation as an excellent smallmouth bass river. Unfortunately, "chronic" fish kills, mostly involving adult smallmouth bass and redbreast sunfish, have plagued the river since 2005. The worst of these incidents was the kill in 2005 where biologists estimated that many of the adult smallmouth bass and redbreast sunfish were lost from some reaches of the South Fork. However, the severity and distribution of these fish kills has varied from year to year causing different sections of the South Fork to have varying densities of fish. Kill episodes in spring 2008 were mild and mostly confined to the upper river. Other species appear to be only mildly affected by these fish kills. Officials are currently trying to determine the exact cause of these fish kills. Biologists have documented above average smallmouth bass spawning success the past four years. These strong "year-classes" of young fish are keeping angler catch rates consistent in spite of the ongoing kills. Many anglers reported high catch rates of 9-12 inch smallmouth bass and increasing numbers of larger fish in 2008. Biologists are encouraged by the ability of the smallmouth bass and sunfish in the South Fork to recover from the recent fish kills. The expanded recovery of the fish population will depend on the occurrence of fish kills in the future. In 2009 anglers should expect to see excellent catch rates of 9-13 inch smallmouth, more quality-sized smallmouth 14-18 inches, and improved abundance of redbreast sunfish throughout the South Fork. Identical fish kills have plagued the North Fork Shenandoah River since 2004. Scientists and concerned citizens are still actively investigating the cause of these fish kills in the Shenandoah River Watershed. Largemouth bass do not gain as much attention as their cousin the smallmouth, but the South

Fork Shenandoah harbors a quality largemouth fishery. Anglers should seek-out the slower, deeper pool habitat when searching for largemouth bass. The Department annually stocks fingerling musky at over 10 sites on the South Fork as far upstream as Island Ford in Rockingham County. The musky fishery appears to be getting better and better. Channel catfish are plentiful throughout the entire South Fork Shenandoah, with a healthy population dominated by quality-size (2-3 lb) cats. American eel, white sucker, margined madtom, northern hogsucker, common carp, fallfish, yellow bullhead, are additional fish species commonly found in the South Fork Shenandoah River.

Staunton (Roanoke) River

The Staunton River is located in south-central Virginia and forms the boundaries of Campbell, Pittsylvania, Halifax and Charlotte counties. Actually an 81-mile segment of the Roanoke River, the Staunton River begins at Leesville Dam and continues to the confluence with John H. Kerr Reservoir. The section of river from Long Island to Rt. 360 is designated as a State Scenic River. Bird watchers, anglers and hunters will enjoy the bounty of the river and its adjacent bottomlands. Canoeists can experience the challenging Fish Trap (Class III) and Cat Rock (Class II) rapids. In addition, an abundance of flat water is available for those individuals seeking a more relaxing trip down the river. A developed public bank fishing area is found just below Leesville Dam and large sections of the Staunton River also are accessible to motorboats, with access points at Altavista, Long Island, Brookneal, Clarkton Bridge, Watkins Bridge, US 360 E and Staunton River State Park.

The bottomlands bordering the river are largely undeveloped and are under ownership of individuals, paper companies, or municipalities. River users should control litter and seek landowner permission prior to camping or picnicking on the river banks. Common courtesy is requested of river users.

Fishing opportunities include seasonal runs of walleye, striped bass, white bass, and suckers. Catfish, including larger flathead catfish, can be caught throughout the river. Smallmouth bass and Roanoke bass (a larger cousin of the rock bass) are common in the upper sections, particularly around riffles and other rocky habitat. Largemouth and crappie are attractive angling prospects in the lower river, toward the state park.

2009 Trout Guide

Introduction

Virginia contains over 2,800 miles of trout streams, in addition to numerous ponds, small lakes and reservoirs. The total includes over 2,350 miles of wild trout streams and about 600 miles of water inhabited with stocked trout. Virginia's diversified trout habitat offers a wide range of trout fishing opportunities.

Virginia's warm climate and topography generally limit trout habitat to the western portion of the state. The Blue Ridge and Allegheny mountains provide the elevation to maintain low water temperatures year-round, while the valleys between these ranges contain the unique limestone formations necessary to produce highly productive spring creeks.

Trout management in Virginia consists of three basic programs. The **Catchable Trout Stocking Program** is the best known and most popular. Such waters are stocked from October through May with catchable-sized trout. See the Trout Stocking Plan on pages 48–49 for the streams and lakes stocked and their stocking schedule.

The **Wild Trout Program** includes the management of reproducing populations of brook, rainbow and brown trout. Efforts are directed primarily at habitat preservation and proper regulation for protection of spawning stocks.

The **Fingerling Trout Stocking Program** involves stocking sub-legal trout into

waters that have cold summer water temperatures and a good food source. This is the smallest of the three programs, but includes many of our high quality, special regulation trout fishing waters.

Restrictions have been applied to certain wild trout waters, as well as several types of stocked trout streams, to provide anglers with the opportunity to catch more and larger trout throughout the fishing season. These special regulation areas include some of the state's best trout waters.

The trout season is open year-round in Virginia. Fishing success for both wild and stocked trout should be very high through the spring, fall and mild winter periods. From June through September, normally low stream flows and warming water temperatures make trout fishing more difficult. However, experienced trout anglers can find good trout fishing opportunities throughout the year.

Detailed regulations on trout streams can be found on pages 17–19 of this regulation pamphlet and more detailed information on specific streams and maps featuring all stocked, special regulation and larger wild trout streams can be found in the Trout Guide on our Web site at www.HuntFish-VA.com.

New For 2009

The most significant changes to the stocked trout program for 2009 are occurring due to the re-construction of the Coursey Springs Trout Rearing Station in Bath County. This is the Department's largest production facility and re-construction requires a total shut-down of trout production at the facility for approximately two years. This shutdown began last spring and will result in a temporary reduction in the number of trout produced and considerable difficulty in distributing trout to the northwest portion of the state. However, reductions will be made across all trout waters so that no one area is more seriously affected. Starting in January, 2009, every Category B and C water, as well as Delayed Harvest and Urban waters, will receive one less stocking per year and every Category A water will receive two less stockings per year until production resumes at Coursey Springs. The number of trout per stocking will not be reduced and every effort will be made to eliminate stockings during periods of lightest use. On the positive side, once Coursey Springs is finished, trout anglers are going to greatly benefit from the reconstruction. With a 30% increase in production capability, anglers will see a combination of more and larger trout. The increase

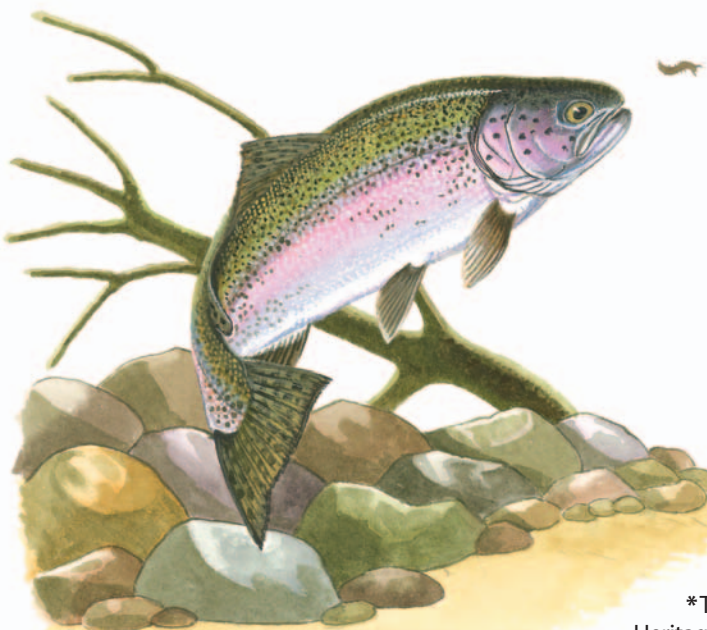
Trout Heritage Waters for 2009

This program was added several years ago for those anglers who enjoyed and missed the old opening day. Selected waters are stocked for the first Saturday in April to create an announced stocking event.

The following waters will be stocked for Heritage Day on April 4.

Beartree Lake	Washington County
Bark Camp Lake	Scott County
Clinch Mountain Fee Fishing Area*	Washington County
Cripple Creek (Ravens Cliff)	Wythe County
Crooked Creek Fee Fishing Area*	Carroll County
Douthat Lake Fee Fishing Area*	Bath County
Jennings Creek	Botetourt County
Lake Witten	Tazewell County
Liberty Lake	Bedford County
Lincolnshire Lake	Tazewell County
Middle Fork Holston River	Smyth County
Passage Creek	Shenandoah County
Pedlar River (upper)	Amherst County
Pigg River	Franklin County
Robinson River	Madison County
Rose River	Madison County
Tinker Creek	Roanoke County

*The fee fishing areas are closed to angling from March 30–April 3. Heritage Waters are closed on April 3. On April 4 fishing can begin at 9:00 a.m.



Rainbow trout: illustration ©Spike Knuth

in production at Coursey will also allow the other Department's four trout stations to focus more on fish growth rather than numbers, so trout anglers statewide should see bigger and better trout in their creels.

The work at Coursey Springs is expected to be completed by December, 2009 with the facility at full production for the 2011 spring season. During construction Coursey Springs Hatchery and the stream below the facility will be closed to public visitation.

There are also a few changes to the trout stocking plan for 2009. Spring Run, the stream flowing out of Coursey Springs will not be stocked during the construction period. Also, Thompson Pond in Fauquier County has been removed from the stocking list due to a leak in the control tower which has drained the lake. On the positive side, Douthat State Park has purchased an additional section of Wilson Creek, resulting in a one-mile extension of the fee fishing area. The Hardware River delayed harvest section in Fluvanna County has been extended downstream approximately 1/2 mile to the confluence with the James River. Finally, the Rose River has been added back to the list of Heritage Waters.

Catchable Trout Stocking Program

As in most states, put-and-take trout fishing draws the most interest and attention in Virginia, probably because of the availability of catchable-sized trout and ease of capture. Virginia's catchable program is supported by hatcheries located at Marion, Paint Bank and Wytheville. Three additional rearing facilities are located at Marion, Montebello and Williamsville.

Trout eggs are collected from large brood stock in early fall and placed in incubator trays. This helps to maintain an even flow of well-oxygenated water through the eggs. Once the embryo is developed, trays must be constantly cleaned and dead eggs removed to control disease. After 25-30 days the trout begin to hatch. The small "fry," as they are called, remain attached to their egg sacs for about 14 days, and draw their food from it. The fry are kept indoors in small troughs until their sacs are absorbed and they begin taking small, pelleted food. When they reach a suitable fingerling stage (2-3 inches) they are transported to rearing facilities where they are placed in raceways.

The fish are fed several times daily for at least a year until they reach catchable size (9-11 inches). During this rearing period, it is necessary to clean raceways daily to control disease and occasionally grade fish to

ensure that the larger trout will not eat smaller ones.

The program is covered primarily from the sale of trout licenses. In addition to a valid state freshwater fishing license, a trout license is required to legally fish in designated stocked trout waters. Annual output from the program has been approximately 1,250,000 catchable trout in recent years, in addition to variable numbers of fingerling and subcatchable trout used in other programs. However, due to the reconstruction at Coursey Springs, total production is expected to be about 990,000 trout in 2009 and 2010.

By January 1, most streams on the stocking list will have already received at least one stocking and will continue to be stocked through spring. Stockings will be discontinued by the end of May and will resume after October 1. Streams and lakes will be stocked at various intervals, depending on their potential to hold trout during the late spring and early fall. Fishermen should find that most streams have good numbers of trout throughout the stocking season.

Waters to be stocked are listed by county in the Trout Stocking Plan (see pages 48-49). The plan indicates the frequency of stocking and the specific stocking periods for each stream. Call your local VDGIF office for more information. For daily trout stocking updates during stocking season, call 1-434-525-FISH (3474) or check our Web site at www.HuntFishVA.com.

Stocked trout streams are marked with appropriate signs, which identify the portion of stream stocked. Marked sections are open to public fishing, in accordance with agreements between the Department and private landowners. This is the only case where anglers are not required to have landowner permission before fishing on private water.

Urban Trout Program

The Department's Urban Trout Fishing Program, which was re-started in November 2006, will be stocked two times during the November-February time period rather than three times, as in the past, due to the loss of trout production at Coursey Springs Hatchery. These two stockings will try to target the most popular time periods for each water. Although the stockings are not as frequent as in the past, the number of trout per stocking will not be reduced. The seven lakes included in this year's program are: Cook Lake (Alexandria), Dorey Park Lake (Henrico County), Lake Biggins (Newport News), Locust Shade Park (Prince William County), Old Cossey Pond (Fredericksburg), Shields Lake (Richmond), and Northwest

River Park (Chesapeake). Anglers are reminded that the culling of trout placed in the creel is no longer legal. Once a trout is placed in the creel or on a stringer it counts as part of the daily creel and cannot be replaced by another trout later. All anglers are required to have a trout license in addition to a fishing license between November 1 and April 30. Juveniles under age 16 need no licenses. For more information, call Fisheries Division at (540) 899-4169.

License Requirements

All residents 16 years of age and older are required to possess a state freshwater fishing license to fish for trout. Persons who fish in designated stocked waters (those waters listed in the Trout Stocking Plan) must have an additional trout license. A National Forest Stamp is necessary when fishing in most waters within the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests. Refer to your fishing regulation pamphlet for specific exemptions and costs of licenses.

When fishing in non-designated trout waters, such as wild trout streams or those special regulation areas not listed in the Trout Stocking Plan, the angler does not need a trout license. However, some of the special regulation areas require a signed landowner permit card which can be obtained from certain VDGIF offices and streamside landowners (see page 18; *Special Trout Stream Areas Note*).

Out-of-state anglers who fish designated stocked waters need to purchase both a non-resident state freshwater fishing license (five-day, non-resident licenses are available), a non-resident trout license, and a National Forest Stamp (where appropriate.) For fishing in wild trout or most special regulation waters, the non-resident needs only a non-resident state freshwater fishing license, the appropriate National Forest Stamp and landowner permit cards.

Note: The trout license is only required from October 1 through June 15. From June 16 through September 30 anglers can fish in stocked trout waters without a trout license.

Fee-fishing areas require a state or non-resident freshwater fishing license and a daily fishing permit that can be obtained on site.

Senior citizens holding previously issued (but no longer available) \$5 senior lifetime fishing licenses do not need to purchase any additional fishing or trout licenses. Virginia residents 65 years or older do not need to purchase a National Forest Stamp.



©Dwight Dyke

2009 Catchable Trout Stocking Plan

These waters require a trout license between October 1 and June 15

Urban Waters require trout license November 1-April 30.

ALBEMARLE COUNTY

Mint Springs Lake (Upper)	A
Mint Springs Lake (Middle)	A
Moormans River (N.Fork)	B (NSF)
Moormans River (S.Fork)	B (NSF)
Sugar Hollow Reservoir	A

ALEXANDRIA CITY

Cook Lake	U
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ALLEGHANY COUNTY

Clifton Forge Reservoir*	A
Jerrys Run*	C
Pounding Mill Creek*	B
Smith Creek*	C (NSF)

AMHERST COUNTY

Davis Mill Creek*	C
Little Irish Creek*	C (NSF)
Pedlar River (Below dam)*	DH
Pedlar River (Lower)*	A
Pedlar River (Upper)*	B (H)
Piney River (S.Fk. and Proper)*	B (NSF)
Rocky Row Run*	C

APPOMATTOX COUNTY

Holliday Creek	DH
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AUGUSTA COUNTY

Back Creek*	B
Braley Pond*	A
Elkhorn Lake*	A
Falls Hollow*	C (NSF)
Hearthstone Lake*	A
Lower Sherando Lake*	A
Mills Creek*	C
North River (Natural Chimneys)	B
North River (Gorge)*	B
North River (Upper)*	B (NSF)
North River (Tail)*	DH
South River (Ridgeview Park)	A
South River	DH\
Upper Sherando Lake*	B

BATH COUNTY

Back Creek	DH
Back Creek*	A
Bullpasture River	A
Douthat Lake and Wilson Creek	+
Jackson River Special Reg.*	
Jackson River (Hidden Valley)*	A
Jackson River (Rt.623)*	A
Pads Creek*	B

BEDFORD COUNTY

Liberty Lake	A (H)
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BLAND COUNTY

Laurel Fork Creek	C
Lick Creek	B
Wolf Creek	A

BOTETOURT COUNTY

Jennings Creek*	A (H)
McFalls Creek*	C
Middle Creek*	B
North Creek*	B
Roaring Run*	B

BUCHANAN COUNTY

Dismal River	A
Russell Fork River	C

CARROLL COUNTY

Chestnut Creek	DH
Crooked Creek	A **
Little Reed Island Creek	A
Lovills Creek	C
Stewarts Creek	B (NSF)

CHESAPEAKE CITY

Northwest River Park	U
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CRAIG COUNTY

Barbours Creek*	B (NSF)
Potts Creek*	A

DICKENSON COUNTY

Cranesnest River	B
Frying Pan Creek	C
Pound River (Flannagan Dam)	A
Russell Fork River (Haysi)	B
Russell Fork River (Bartlick)	A

FAIRFAX COUNTY

Accotink Creek	DH
Holmes Run	DH

FLOYD COUNTY

Burkes Fork	A
Goose Creek	B
Howells Creek	B (NSF)
Laurel Fork	B
Little Indian Creek	B (NSF)
Little River	A
Mira Fork	C (NSF)
Rush Fork	C (NSF)
West Fork Little River	B (NSF)

FLUVANNA COUNTY

Hardware River	DH
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FRANKLIN COUNTY

Runnett Bag Creek	B
Pigg River	A

FREDERICK COUNTY

Clearbrook Lake	A
Hogue Creek	B
Paddy Run*	B
Winchester Lake	A

FREDERICKSBURG

Old Cossey Pond	U
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GILES COUNTY

Big Stoney Creek*	A
Dismal Creek*	B (NSF)
Wolf Creek	B

GRAYSON COUNTY

Big Wilson Creek	A
Elk Creek	A
Fox Creek*	B
Hales Lake*	A
Helton Creek	B
Middle Fox Creek	B

GREENE COUNTY

South River	B
Swift Run	C

HENRICO COUNTY

Dorey Park Lake	U
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HENRY COUNTY

Smith River (Dam)	B
Smith River (Lower)	A

HIGHLAND COUNTY

Bullpasture River	A
S.Br.Potomac River	B

LEE COUNTY

Martins Creek	A
North Fork Powell River	A

MADISON COUNTY

Hughes River	A
Robinson River	A (H)
Rose River	A

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Craig Creek*	B
Pandapas Pond*	A
Poverty Creek*	C
Toms Creek	B

NELSON COUNTY

South Rockfish River	C (NSF)
Tye River	A

NEWPORT NEWS

Lake Biggins	U
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PAGE COUNTY

Cub Run*	B
Hawksbill Creek	A
Upper Passage Creek*	C

PATRICK COUNTY

Ararat River	B
Clarks Creek	B
Dan River (Above Talbott)	B (NSF)
Dan River (Below Powerhouse)	A
Poorhouse Creek	C (NSF)
Rockcastle Creek	B
Round Meadow Creek	C (NSF)
South Mayo River (North Fork)	C
South Mayo River (South Fork)	

PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY

Quantico MCB	B (NSF)
Locust Shade Park	U

PULASKI COUNTY

Peak Creek	B
Peak Creek	DH

RICHMOND CITY

Shield Lake	U
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ROANOKE COUNTY

Glade Creek	A
Roanoke River (City)	A
Roanoke River (Green Hill Park)	DH
Roanoke River (Salem)	A
Roanoke River (Salem)	DH
Tinker Creek	A (H)

ROCKBRIDGE COUNTY

Irish Creek*	B
Maury River	A
Mill Creek*	A
South River	B

ROCKINGHAM COUNTY

Briery Branch Lake*	A
Dry River	B (NSF)
German River	C
Hone Quarry Lake*	A
Hone Quarry Run*	C
North Fork Shenandoah River	B
Silver Lake	B
Slate Lick Lake*	B
Slate Lick Run*	B
South River (Grottoes)	A

RUSSELL COUNTY

Big Cedar Creek	A
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SCOTT COUNTY

Bark Camp Lake*	A (H)
Big Stony Creek	B
Little Stony Creek*	B
Stock Creek	B
Straight Fork (Lower)	C

SHENANDOAH COUNTY

Mill Creek	B
Passage Creek*	A (H)
Peters Mill Creek*	C
Stony Creek	A
Tomahawk Pond*	B

SMYTH COUNTY

Comers Creek*	C
Cressy Creek*	C
Dickey Creek*	C
Hurricane Creek*	C
Middle Fork Holston River (Marion)	A (H)
Middle Fork Holston River (Upper)	B
South Fork Holston River (Buller Dam)*	A
South Fork Holston River (Lower)	A
Staley Creek	A

STAUNTON CITY

Lake Tams	B
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TAZEWELL COUNTY

Lake Witten	A (H)
Laurel Creek*	C

Lincolnshire Lake	A (H)
Little Tumbling Creek	B

WARREN COUNTY

Happy Creek	B
Passage Creek	DH

WASHINGTON COUNTY

Beartree Lake*	A (H)
Big Brumley Creek	C
Big Tumbling Creek	A **
Straight Branch*	C
Tennessee Laurel	A
Valley Creek	C
Whitetop Laurel (Lower)*	A
Whitetop Laurel (Upper)*	A

WISE COUNTY

Clear Creek*	C
Middle Fork Powell River	B
Pound River/N.Fk. Pound River	DH

WYTHE COUNTY

Cripple Creek (Rt. 94)	A
Cripple Creek (Ravens)	A (H)
Gullion Fork Ponds*	B
Rural Retreat Lake Pond	A
Stoney Creek*	C
West Fork Reed Creek*	C



Category A stocked 6 times between October 1 and May 30.

Category B stocked 4 times between October 1 and May 15.

Category C stocked 2 times between October 1 and April 30.

* National Forest Waters

+ Douthat stocked as Category A, Wilson as Category B put-and-take water after fee fishing season

DH Delayed Harvest Water-Special Regulations apply, please refer Delayed Harvest water on page 19.

(NSF) These waters do not receive fall & early winter stockings

** A section of these waters is reserved for a fee fishing area

(H) These waters will receive a stocking for the "Heritage Day" program. Heritage Day is April 4. For details see page 46.

U Urban fishing waters, trout license required November 1 through April 30, stocked 2 times between November 1 and February 28.

Stocking information for put-and-take stocking can be obtained on our Web site or by calling 434-525-FISH (3474). The Web site and recording are updated after 4:00 p.m. each day fish are stocked.

©above illustrations by Michael Simon

The Virginia Angler Recognition Program



“Trophy-sized fish” that are caught in Virginia waters can be registered through the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries’ Angler Recognition Program. This program grants:

Trophy Fish Awards:

Certificates for registration of trophy size fish (see size chart below).

Expert Angler Awards:

Certificates and patches for registration of 10 trophy fish of the same species.

Master Angler Awards I-IV:

Certificates and patches for registration of 5 trophy fish of different species. Four successive levels.

Angler of the Month: Pins for registration of the largest trophy fish of each species, by weight, each month.

Angler of the Year: Pins for registration of the largest trophy fish of each species, by weight, each year.

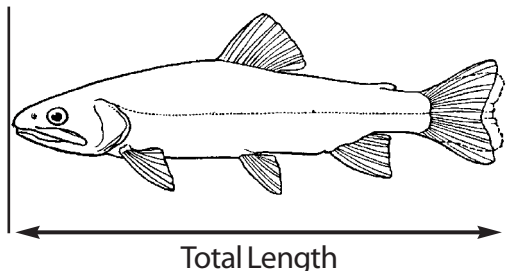
Creel of the Year: Recognizes the angler who catches and registers the most trophy-sized fish from January 1 through December 31, annually. Accolade presented is determined annually.

State Record Fish Awards are presented to anglers who catch fish that weigh more than the current state record weights (see State Record Freshwater Fish on page 52. State record holders are issued a wooden plaque.

Program Policies

- The fish must be caught in Virginia inland waters or above the designated freshwater lines on tidal waters (see page 7).
- The fish must be caught legally (in accordance with Virginia Freshwater Fishing Regulations) by noncommercial methods.
- The fish must meet or exceed the minimum weights or lengths.
- The fish must be registered according to the proper procedures. Fish may be certified by weight, or length, or both. Only store certified weights will be accepted.
- Applications must be received within 60 days to be eligible for Angler of the Month/Year competition.

How to Measure a Fish



Qualifying a Trophy Fish by Length and Photo

- Lay the fish on top of or beside a flat measuring rule.
- Do not lay the rule over the curvature of the fish’s body.
- Close the fish’s mouth and squeeze the tail lobes together.
- Measure from the tip of the snout to the end of the tail to the nearest 1/4-inch. See diagram below.
- Have an observer verify the length and complete the witness information on the trophy fish application. Or, take a picture of the fish next to the ruler and complete the length witness information yourself.
- Return the fish safely to the water if desired.

Certifying a Trophy Fish by Weight:

- Take your fish to a store with certified scales.
- Have a clerk weigh the fish and complete the weight witness information on the trophy fish application.

Trophy Fish Lengths and Weights

To qualify as a trophy, fish must meet or exceed the following lengths or weights.

	Length	Weight
Largemouth bass	22"	8 lbs.
Smallmouth bass	20"	5 lbs.
Striped bass	37"	20 lbs.
Hybrid Striped Bass*	24"	8 lbs.
Rock bass	12"	1 lb.
White bass	18"	2 lbs. 8 ozs.
Bowfin (Grindle)	30"	10 lbs.
Flathead catfish	40"	25 lbs.
Channel catfish	30"	12 lbs.
Blue catfish	38"	30 lbs.
Carp	34"	20 lbs.
Chain pickerel	24"	4 lbs.
Crappie	15"	2 lbs.
Freshwater Drum	24"	6 lbs.
Gar	40"	10 lbs.
Muskellunge	40"	15 lbs.
Northern pike	30"	6 lbs.
Yellow perch	12"	1 lb. 4 oz.
White perch	13"	1 lb. 4 oz.
Sunfish	11"	1 lb.
Brook trout	16"	2 lbs.
Brown trout	25"	5 lbs.
Rainbow trout	22"	4 lbs.
Walleye	25"	5 lbs.
Sauger**	18"	2 lbs.

* Claytor and Flannagan Reservoirs only

** Clinch and Powell rivers only

Freshwater Trophy Fish Award Application Form

Fill out completely & enclose payment. Please Print.

Age of Applicant: _____

☐ Check box if applicant is under 16 & receiving a trophy fish award for the 1st time for this species.

Name: _____ ☐ Jr ☐ Sr
First Middle Last

☐ Female ☐ Male Birth Date: m/____ d/____ y/____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (____) _____

- Species of Fish _____
- Weight of Fish _____
- Length of Fish (to nearest 1/4 inch) _____
- Name of water where caught: _____
- Type of water where caught: ☐ River ☐ Public Lake/Reservoir ☐ Stream ☐ Private Pond/Lake
- Name of County/City where caught: _____
- Date Caught: m/____ d/____ y/____
- Was the fish released? ☐ Yes ☐ No

☐ **Weight Certification:** Check box if certifying your fish by weight.

Witness signature: _____

Store Name _____ Phone (____) _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

☐ **Length Certification:** Check box if certifying your fish by length with a witness.

Witness signature: _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

☐ **Photo Certification:** Check box if certifying your fish by length with a picture. Print your name, birth date and fish species on back of photo. Enclose with application. Photos become the property of DGIF and are not returned. Photos may be used in publications.

Check box if you now qualify for an ☐ Expert Angler ☐ Master Angler

(Angler sign here) I, _____ hereby affirm that the above information is true and that in taking this fish I complied with all state fishing regulations and rules of the Virginia Angler Recognition Program and that the witness/es actually witnessed the weighing and/or measuring of this fish.

Registration Fees

- **Trophy Fish Certificate:** \$4.00 per fish (No charge for registration of the **first** trophy fish of each species for youth under 16 years old.)
- **Master Angler, Expert Angler, Angler of the Month/Year:** No charge
- For replacement award information call 804-367-1000.

Procedures for Registering Trophy Fish

- Certify the size of the fish.
- Complete one application form for each fish you are registering. You may include more than one application form per envelope. Applications may be found at bait and tackle outlets, DGIF offices and on the DGIF Web site at www.HuntFishVA.com.
- **Mail the application form(s) with payment of \$4.00 per fish within 60 days from the date of catch.** Make check or money order payable to the *Treasurer of Virginia*. Send to: Cashier, VDGIF, 4010 West Broad St., Richmond, VA 23230.

State Record Freshwater Fish

The rules for certifying a state record are as follows:

1. The fish must be caught in Virginia waters with rod, reel, line, and hook held in hand. The angler must identify the specific waters from which the fish was caught.
2. A Department employee must witness the official weighing. Only the weight observed by the Department employee will be certified. The fish must be unfrozen, in whole condition and made available to the Department employee for a thorough examination. The fish may also be made available to the Department for further examination if deemed necessary by the Department representative.
3. The species of the fish must be confirmed by a Department fish biologist who must inspect the fish in whole condition. (This can be accomplished subsequent to the weighing if the Department witness is not a fish biologist).
4. Application must be made within 60 days of the catch. A clear, side view photograph of the fish should accompany the application.
5. Weighing scales must be appropriate to the size of the fish and be certified for legal commercial trade. Fish under 25 pounds must be weighed on a scale capable of weighing to the ounce. Fish over 25 pounds should be weighed on scales having no greater graduations than one-half pound. Whenever scales of 8-ounce graduations are used, the fish weight will always be rounded down to the nearest one-half pound.
6. Any potential state record fish found to contain artificial food in the stomach will not be recognized as a new record.
7. No fish caught within the boundaries of a public or private aquaculture facility or private fee fishing area will be recognized as a state record.
8. If there is reasonable doubt regarding any aspect of the application, it may be rejected.
9. One appeal of the Committee's decision may be made within 60 days of notification. The appeal must be in writing to the Chairman, State Record Fish Committee.

Virginia State Record Fish as of 10/1/08

Species	Weight	Location	Date	Name
Blue Catfish	95 lbs., 11 oz.	James River	6/15/2006	Archie D. Gold
Bowfin	16 lbs., 8 oz.	Lake Cahoon	10/17/2004	John W. Plyler, Jr.
Brook Trout	5 lbs., 10 oz.	Big Stoney Creek	10/22/1987	Greg Orndorff
Brown Trout	14 lbs., 12 oz.	S.Fk. Holston	5/24/1990	Mike S. Perkins
Carp	49 lbs., 4 oz.	Lake Prince	6/25/1986	Jeffrey Graham
Chain Pickerel	7 lbs., 10 oz.	Lake Shawnee	12/29/1996	R.L. White
Channel Catfish	31 lbs., 8 oz.	Rappahannock	10/2/1992	Sue Stanley
Crappie	4 lbs., 10 oz.	Private Pond	4/24/1994	Justin Elliott
Flathead Catfish	66 lbs., 4 oz.	Occoquan Reservoir	5/6/1994	Mike Willems
Freshwater Drum	22 lbs. 6 oz.	Kerr Reservoir	8/3/2008	Michael D an Fuller
Gar	25 lbs., 2 oz.	Lake Prince	5/28/1987	Roger Beaver
Hybrid Striped Bass	10 lb. minimum to qualify			
Largemouth Bass	16 lbs., 4 oz.	Conner Lake	5/20/1985	Richard Tate
Musky (& Tiger)	45 lbs., 8 oz.	New River	6/1/2007	Shannon Hill
Northern Pike	31 lbs., 4 oz.	Motts	7/24/1994	George Wood
Rainbow Trout	14 lbs., 7 oz.	Greers Trout Pond	6/28/1993	Michael Lowe
Roanoke Bass	2 lbs., 9 oz.	Western Branch Reservoir	5/28/2005	Harry G. Swauger
Rock Bass	2 lbs., 2 oz.	Laurel Bed	5/17/1986	Larry Ball
Sauger	2 lbs., 12 oz.	Clinch River	10/21/2005	Freland E. Maxfield
Smallmouth Bass	8 lbs., 1 oz.	New River	3/12/2003	Donald S. Eaton, Jr.
Spotted Bass	3 lbs., 10 oz.	Claytor Lake	7/29/1993	Mike Ritter
Striped Bass	53 lbs., 7 oz.	Leesville Lake	3/16/2000	James B. Davis
Sunfish	4 lbs., 12 oz.	Private Pond	4/28/1986	Michael Mills
Walleye	15 lbs., 15 oz.	New River	12/15/2000	Anthony P. Duncan
White Bass	6 lbs., 13 oz.	Lake Orange	7/31/1989	Ron Sprouse
White Catfish	7 lbs., 6 oz.	Western Branch Reservoir	3/24/1992	Thomas F. Elkins
White Perch	2 lbs., 8 oz.	Lake Prince	4/30/1995	Jimmy A. Roper
Yellow Perch	2 lbs., 7 oz.	Lake Moomaw	3/20/1999	Tim Austin



Application for Virginia State Record Fish

Angler's Name (print) _____

Driver's License # _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

City, State, and Zip Code _____

Phone: Home _____ Business _____

Species _____ Weight _____ lbs. _____ oz(s).

Length _____ inches _____ Girth _____

Name of lake or stream (must be specific) _____ Date caught _____

How caught: casting/spinning _____ fly rod _____ other methods _____

Name of bait or lure _____ Line test _____

Fishing license number _____

Weighed at _____ (store or other public scale)

Type of scale used _____ Smallest increment measured _____

Scale serial # _____ Certified for trade? Yes _____ No _____

Department employee signature (witness to weighing) _____

Witness _____

Address _____

Species verified by _____ (Department Fish Biologist)

I hereby affirm the above information is to the best of my knowledge, true and correct and that the taking of the fish described above was within the state of Virginia under the rules for state record certification.

Angler's signature _____ Date _____